Poet Lore

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MADMAN OR SAINT

A Drama in Three Acts

By José Echégaray

Translated from the Spanish by Ruth Lansing

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Lorenzo de Avendaño
Angela
Inez
The Duchess de Almonte
Edward
Jane
Thomas
Dr. Bermudez
Braulio
Benedict
A Servant

The action takes place in Madrid, in the house of Lorenzo de Avendaño.

ACT I

(*The scene is laid in* Lorenzo's *study, a room octagonal in shape. On the left of the spectator, in the foreground, an open fire; above the fireplace is a large mirror in a black frame; beyond this is a door. On the right front another door; beyond it a window. In the rear is the main door. On the*

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two oblique sides of the octagon are large bookcases. On the left stands a study-table with a writing-stand and an arm-chair. On the right is a sofa. On some of the chairs, on the table, on the brackets of the bookcases, and on the walls are objects of art in confusion, but yet without making the effect seem overloaded. The decorations are elegant and rich, but in very severe taste. The hangings and furniture are of a dark color. It is a winter's day. the light is very dim.)

Scene I

Lorenzo (*seated at the table and reading attentively*).— " 'Niece,' replied Don Quixote, 'these are the mercies which God has shown me at this moment, and which, as I said, my sins do not hinder. Now my judgment is free and clear, without the dark shadows of ignorance which were cast over it by my harmful and continual reading of detestable books of chivalry. Now I recognize their absurdities and delusions, and my only trouble is that this realization has come so late that I have no time to make some reparation by reading other books which might be a beacon to my mind.

" 'Niece, I feel that I am near to death; I would meet it so that it might be understood that my life had not been so wild as to make me remembered as a madman, for although I have been one I would not confirm this truth at my death.' " (*Ceases to read and remains brooding for a long time.*) Madness to strive for justice in this hard battle of life without truce or rest, as the immortal hero of immortal Cervantes strove in the world of his dreams! Madness to love with an infinite love and without ultimate attainment divine beauty, as he loved the Dulcinea of his passionate desires! Madness to follow in spirit after the ideal over the difficult and prosaic road of human realities — which is much like running after a star over rocks and through thorns! It is madness, as the doctors assure us, but so harmless and apparently so uncontagious that we do not need another Quixote to quell it.

(*Pause. Then he rises, comes to the center of the stage, and again remains lost in thought.*)

Scene II

(*Enter* Angela *and* Thomas. *They stop in the door, right front, and from there half hidden by the portiere, watch* Lorenzo. *He is in the center of the stage, standing back to them.*)

Angela.— Do you see him? As usual: reading and thinking.

Thomas.— Angela, your husband is a scholar; but learning is not to be abused. If a string at its tensest gives forth the clearest notes, it also breaks more easily; and when that has happened an eternal silence follows the

divine music. While the brain is stirring in its sublime struggles, madness lies in ambush; remember that. (*Pause.*)

Lorenzo.— Strange and wonderful book! How many problems Cervantes puts in you, perhaps without knowing it! Your hero a madman! Mad, yes, mad! (*Pause.*) He who hears only the voice of duty on his way through life, he who at every instant conquering his passions, subduing his affections, with no other ideal than justice, and no other model than truth, rules himself by truth and justice in all his acts, and with a sacrilegious ambition wishes to be perfect as God in His heaven — what a strange being that man would seem in all human society! What a new Don Quixote among so many Sanchos! And as he would be obliged to condemn in one selfishness, in another vanity, in one luck, in another licentious tastes, in all, weakness, how his own family — like the housekeeper and niece of the knight-errant —how his own friends, like the priest and the barber and Sanson Carrasco, how dukes and inn-keepers, and Moors, and Christians, and all men and women would declare him mad. And he would consider himself mad or in dying would pretend to do so in order that they should at least let him die in peace!

Thomas (*comes up to* LORENZO *and puts one hand on his shoulder.* ANGELA *also approaches him.*).— Lorenzo!

Lorenzo (*turning round*).— Thomas! Angela! Were you there?

Thomas.— Yes. We were listening to some of your philosophical monologue. And why these wild outbursts from my good friend?

Lorenzo.— I have been reading 'Don Quixote' and it has gone to my head, and mingled there with other modern philosophies that are wandering about through the cells of gray matter, as my dyed-in-the-grain doctor would say.

Thomas.— As anyone would say who wanted to say anything based on reason.

Angela.— How dreadful! Are you going to commence one of those interminable arguments of yours about positivism and idealism and all the other isms in the dictionary, which are only traps for common sense?

Thomas.— Don't worry, Angela, for I have something more interesting to say to Lorenzo.

Lorenzo.— And I too have something more urgent to ask you.

Angela.— Well, I believe it; our daughter's health is more interesting and urgent than the nonsense and delusions with which you fill your heads.

Lorenzo (*tenderly*).— How do you find my dear girl to-day?

Angela.— How is Inez? (*Pause.*)

Lorenzo.— Come, answer! Don't keep us in this state of anxiety!

(*Another pause.* THOMAS *shakes his head sadly.*)

Angela.— Thomas, tell us! Is she in danger, perhaps?

Lorenzo.— Wife, what do you mean? Don't say that!

Thomas.— There, there. How hasty you are! It is a serious matter — that I don't deny.

Lorenzo.— What do you mean?

Angela.— What's this you say?

Lorenzo.— What disease has she? What is its name?

Angela.— How is it treated? Because it must be cured in some way. Thomas, you must, you *must* save my child.

Thomas.— What disease has she? One of those that works most havoc among the living. What is its name? The poets call it love; we doctors give it another name. How is it treated? At once, and by the priest; and that is such a proved remedy that a month after having used it neither husband nor wife remember the fatal disease.

Angela.— What nonsense you are talking, Thomas! You have given me a terrible start!

Thomas.— To speak seriously, the fact is, that considering the condition of this daughter of yours, her nervous temperament, her extremely sensitive nature, and that romantic love-affair, her illness is a serious matter. If a remedy is not quickly found in the happy quiet of married life. Angela, Lorenzo, my friends, it grieves me to say it, but duty compels me — don't look for Inez's recovery.

Lorenzo.— Thomas!

Angela.— Do you think ——

Thomas.— I think that Inez has inherited her father's excitable and fanciful imagination; that to-day the fever of love is racing through all her veins in waves of fire. And if you do not marry her to Edward, and immediately at that — if she happens to understand that her hopes are not to be realized, her delirious imagination and her violent passion will be fatal, I know, although I cannot say in what form.

Lorenzo.— Good heavens!

Angela.— My child!

Thomas.— Now you know my opinion; an opinion expressed without any evasion or beating about the bush, but just as the urgency of the case demands, and with the loyalty which is required of me by the affection which unites us and by the love which I have for this innocent child.

Angela (*to* LORENZO *in a resolute tone*).— You have heard that; Inez and Edward must be married.

Lorenzo.— I should like that very much, Angela. Edward is good, he is intelligent, he loves our daughter madly, but ——

Angela.— But what? But we are not noble in rank, and Edward's

mother, the dowager Duchess de Almonte, is opposed to this match? And what does it matter when it is *he* who wishes it, and after all she is not the one who is the most concerned?

Lorenzo.— Angela, think of it; for us to aid the rebellion of a son against his mother!

Angela.— Lorenzo, think of it; for us to sacrifice our daughter to the vanity of that woman!

Lorenzo.— It seems easy enough to me to complain about vanity and misfortune; what is important is to find a remedy for the trouble ——

Angela.— Why not speak to the duchess? They say that aside from her aristocratic prejudices she is a kind-hearted woman, and is devoted to her Edward. You go there, and beg and implore her.

Lorenzo.— I beg and implore! I humble myself! Surely I am not the one who should go to ask for her son; she is the one who should come to my house to ask me for Inez' hand. Social conventions, respect for woman, my own dignity demand it.

Angela.— Here you have the philosopher, the scholar, the perfect man, full of vanity and pride. (*Turns to* THOMAS, *who has gone up to the table and is looking at the books.*)

Lorenzo.— Angela, you are unjust; it is not pride, it is dignity — yes, dignity, because it is not fitting for us to beg for Inez's forehead (which in itself has the best crown) the ducal crown which another family scornfully refuses us; it is not fitting, I say, for us to go from door to door, and still less if there is a coat of arms upon the lintel, holding out our hands for them to give us the alms of a name when Inez has mine, as good, as unstained, and as honorable as any other, however great it may be.

Thomas.— Lorenzo is right; but you're right too, Angela.

Angela.— Well, then, don't go; keep your dignity as a scholar and philosopher intact. I, who am only a poor mother, I will go. I am not ashamed to go from door to door begging, not for crowns and coats of arms, but for the life and happiness of my daughter.

Lorenzo.— Neither am I, Angela. You are right. Let the world say what it please, let the duchess think what she likes, I will go. (*To* THOMAS:) You who have correct and severe standards and who judge things calmly, tell me your opinion frankly.

Angela.— Oh, what a man! There he is — discussing whether he must go or not! These matters, my philosopher husband, are not decided by the head, but by the heart. I am surprised that you don't begin to go through some of your big books and hunt in them for the solution of the problem. It's a wonder you're not already consulting the German philosophers or the Greek classics or the incomprehensible puzzle of your mathe-

matical works to see whether some author has not treated concretely the strange case of the future marriage of Inez de Avendaño with Edward de Almeida, Duke of Almonte. And I suppose if by a plus b any of your favorite authorities should show you the impropriety of the marriage, by a plus b you would let the poor dear girl die.

Lorenzo.— Don't make fun of me, Angela. You know I adore Inez.

Scene III

(*Enter* Inez, *right front, as* Lorenzo *utters the last words. She stops on hearing her name.*)

Lorenzo.— If it is for her life, for her happiness! No, to dry one of her tears, I would give all those from my eyes; for an hour of happiness for my Inez, I would gladly change into hours of torture all that is left me of existence. (Inez, *who has not yet been noticed, holds out her arms to her father with an expression of affection and gratitude, and sends him a passionate kiss.*) Come let's say no more about the matter. This very day I will go to see the duchess; I shall beg, I shall implore, I shall humble myself if it is necessary, and she will yield. Won't she have to yield? (*Start of joy from* Inez. Angela *goes to her husband and takes his hand tenderly.*) I have no titles of nobility, but I have a name, which, if I have not been able to make it famous by work and study ——

Thomas.— Yes, famous, my dear Lorenzo.

Lorenzo.— Not famous, but one to be respected. Besides, I have many millions inherited from my family, which I will hand over to Edward and the duchess that they may regild their proud crowns, somewhat tarnished by time. (*To* Angela): So now you know; Inez shall marry and be happy, and her happiness will be ours.

Angela.— And your happiness that of us all, who will live seeing ourselves in you. In you, my Lorenzo, who are the most loving, the kindest, and best of men, when learning does not absorb you!

Inez (*utters a cry, and half-fainting, leans against the door in order not to fall*).

Angela.— Inez, my child! (*Runs to support her.*)

Lorenzo.— Inez, Inez! What is the matter? (*Follows* Angela.)

Thomas.— Come, my dear, what nonsense is this? (*Goes up to her.*)

Inez (*goes to the sofa on the right and sits down there. The others surround her anxiously*).— Nothing, it is nothing — I want to cry and I'm so happy I can't. I want to laugh, and I feel the tears coming into my eyes. I love you so much, so much, father dear! (*Hugs and caresses him.*) How good you are! How good God made you! I am happy, very happy. (*Breaks down in her mother's arms.*)

Angela.— There, dear, cry, and you'll feel better. Do you realize how kind your father is? You should love him very much.

Inez.— I do with all my heart. And when are you going to go? To-day, aren't you?

Thomas.— Oh, you little egoist! So, then, we love papa very much when he does what pleases us? And if he should not go to see the duchess would we love him as much, just as much as now? (*Laughs at her protestations of affection.*)

Inez.— Just as much.

Thomas (*in a doubting tone*).— Just the same then?

Inez.— Yes, really, but (*archly*) I should be so sad that it would not occur to me to mention it.

Thomas.— Well!

Inez.— Before, something weighed down my heart and held me by the throat. Now, without any effort, spontaneously, just as tears of happiness flow, words of love come. Before, I could only have said, 'How unhappy I am, father!' Now, *now*, I don't think of myself, I think of him, and from my heart to my lips rises this cry of love — how much I love you! (*Flings herself into her father's arms again.*)

Lorenzo.— Inez, my girl!

Inez.— And you too, mother, you too! (*Hugs her mother.* LORENZO *and* THOMAS *leave the sofa where* ANGELA *and* INEZ *remain, and come to the center of the stage.*)

Thomas.— Poor philosopher! See, neither of those two has read a single page of all your books, and they know more than you. You think you are strong, and in their hands you are yielding as wax; you think you are wise, and in their arms you are an ignorant man, not to say a fool; you think you are just and incorruptible, and the will of these two women would bring you to all injustices and to all weaknesses.

Lorenzo.— No, Thomas, when the idea of right supports me, my will is of iron.

Thomas.— I do not say 'we shall see,' because they are both angels; but woe to you if they were not! Let me parody the great poet and say, 'Temptation thy name is woman!'

Lorenzo.— 'Words, words, words!' he had said before, doubtless foreseeing that you would parody him. (*Speaks with a certain excitement.*)

Thomas.— Now you are getting worked up!

Inez.— Don't tease papa.

Lorenzo.— My dear, the absurd ideas of this doctor don't bother me.

Thomas.— So, then, we agree that for affection, friendship, love — those

things that you call the mysterious attraction of one soul for another soul, one can and must go ——

Lorenzo.— As far as sacrifice, yes; but never as far as wrong.

Thomas.— A nice maxim for a book of morals!

Lorenzo.— And a still better one for a conscience.

Thomas.— And may there not be cases in which, in order to avoid greater evils, this Cato-like conscience might compromise with a wrong so small, so very small that it wouldn't amount to a grain of sand?

Lorenzo.— If you take that grain of sand upon yourself, very soon it will weigh upon you like a mountain of rock.

Thomas.— Now you are getting more excited than ever!

Inez.— Please, Dr. Thomas, don't say things like that to papa.

Thomas.— In short, war to the death on evil in all its shapes and disguises. Is that right?

Lorenzo.— You have said it.

Thomas.— Then for an immediate application of your theory! Really I had forgotten it and it is quite a story. Listen to me carefully; are you all listening?

Lorenzo.— What is it?

(Angela *and* Inez *join them.*)

Thomas.— This morning a woman asked me in her name to bring you ——

Lorenzo.— What?

Thomas.— A kiss.

Angela.— For him!

Lorenzo.— For me!

Thomas.— Yes, but don't be alarmed. It is the kiss of an old woman, and it is drenched in tears; it is the last sorrowful contraction of dying lips; it is the last farewell of a being who within a few short hours will no longer exist.

Lorenzo.— I don't know ——

Thomas.— She — this poor woman — sent for me this morning; I went up to the garret where she is dying; she told me her name — if she had not, I should never have recognized her, and swearing to me that she was innocent, she begged me, nevertheless, to intercede with you, so that you would pardon her.

Lorenzo.— I do not understand a single word of this speech you are making.

Thomas.— Do you remember when your mother died?

Lorenzo.— What a question, Thomas! I did not know my father, he died when I was a mere child, but my mother — (*deeply moved*), my dear mother!

Thomas.— Do you remember that when she suddenly realized she was dying, she wished to speak to you and could not, and then taking from her neck a valuable locket that she always wore she put it into your hands, in her last agony fixing upon you her eyes, already dimmed by the eternal shadows?

Lorenzo.— I remember it well. Go on — go on ——

Thomas.— In short, do you remember that after your mother died and you fainted the locket disappeared, and do you remember who was accused of the theft?

Lorenzo.— She? Is it she? Jane, my nurse! My poor Jane!

Thomas.— It is Jane who is dying near here in a wretched attic; Jane, who in the sad kiss that I bring you implores your pardon.

Lorenzo.— Jane, my second mother! She who for twenty-five years was a real mother to me! But what were you saying about pardon? What about compromising with wrong? To pardon is not compromising, nor does the poor old woman need my pardon. She — she be capable of! Impossible!

Thomas.— Not so impossible. When the maid who cared for your mother's jewels informed the judge of the loss of the valuable jewelled locket, and the first investigations were made, Jane denied having it. Nevertheless, she admitted that she had taken it from your hands when you fainted; two days later she was detected leaving the locket behind some porcelain vases. She was taken to prison, was condemned, in disgraceful confinement she suffered the penalty of her crime, and only your influence and your strong recommendations could restore, if not her lost reputation, at least her liberty.

Lorenzo (*excited*).— And I insist that Jane accused, Jane in the criminal's dock, Jane in a shameful prison, is innocent, and that human justice is mistaken.

Thomas.— Appearances ——

Lorenzo.— Are frequently misleading.

Thomas.— And how do you explain?

Lorenzo.— There must be some explanation; there is some mystery here that we do not know about.

Thomas (*to* ANGELA).— Now he has rushed off on the track of mysteries and in search of supernatural explanations for a fact which, from my point of view, has a simple and natural explanation in human frailty.

Lorenzo.— Well, I know that my poor nurse was incapable of such a base act. I should have defended her if I had not been prevented by illness at the time of my mother's death; and when after her release the poor woman disappeared, I shed bitter tears for her. God knows how eagerly I

hunted for her everywhere; God knows how I wanted her to come to me — and she, cruelly — oh, why didn't she come? No, Jane, dear Jane, you shall not die before I hold you in my arms and give you back your good-by kiss. (*His excitement increases. He rings a bell and a servant in livery appears.*) The carriage! At once! Hurry! I am going to bring her home — right off! Isn't that right, Angela, oughtn't I to bring her? Isn't that right, Inez?

Angela.— Anyway it is a charitable act.

Lorenzo.— It is only a just reparation! (*Exit for a moment by the door on the left.*)

Thomas.— He is the best fellow — but the most credulous! And he will believe implicitly everything that poor old woman may tell him. He will even help her invent some extravagant story. Angela, you and I will have to hold a censorship of this library as the priest and barber did in the library of the ingenious knight.

Angela.— Oh, if I only could!

(*Enter* LORENZO *dressed for the street.*)

Lorenzo.— Come, we're off (*to* THOMAS) you are coming with me to help me bring her.

Thomas.— At your service.

Lorenzo.— But do you think that she can be moved?

Thomas.— The poor wretch is dying of consumption, and she will die just the same in her attic, on the cushions of your carriage, or in entering what will be to her an enchanted palace. However, it is possible that joy may revive her, and she may gain a few hours of existence.

Lorenzo.— Well, let's go, then. Good-by, Angela. Good-by, Inez.

Inez.— Good-by. And then (*coaxingly*) will you see the duchess?

Lorenzo. — Yes, dear, I shall go later on. You can wait; the poor old woman cannot, and she comes first.

Angela (*aside to* THOMAS).—And if my daughter is married, you assure me she runs no risk?

Thomas.— Only those of marriage, which are not a few.

(*Exit* THOMAS *and* ANGELA *in the rear and talking in low tones. Behind them* LORENZO *and* INEZ; *he leaves her in the doorway.*)

SCENE IV

Inez (*comes back to the center of the stage, happy as a child, and clapping her hands*).— To-day he will speak to the duchess! He has promised me, and he is very reliable; he always keeps his promises. So he will speak to her, and my father speaks so well! Why shouldn't he? He is a learned

man. Surely he will convince her. Why, if such a man couldn't convince her that I must marry Edward, what would be the use of his having studied so much? Why have so many books in French, Italian, German, and even in Greek? Could learning be more useless! But he will do what he likes with the duchess. Besides, everyone says she is a saint. Why not? She is Edward's mother. A saint, they say. Well, if she is a saint and does not let me marry Edward, that's not being much of a saint! What would she be a saint for? Of course, we shall be married; I insist we shall be married. (*Pause.*) Why, it seems unreal; it seems a dream! If it is a dream, I pray that I may never awake! But it isn't a dream. This is my father's study. These are his big books. (*Goes up to one of the bookcases.*) Newton, Kant, Hegel, Humboldt, Shakespeare, Lagrange, Plato, St. Thomas. Evidently if it were a dream I should not remember all those names, for what do I know of such famous gentlemen? (*Looks out of the window.*) I repeat it is not a dream, there outside the rain is falling, falling, falling. What a merry thing the rain is! The air seems changed into little bars of crystal! And over there in the mirror I see myself. (*Goes up to the mirror coquettishly.*) There I am, I recognize myself. I, with my oval face, and Edward says it is such a perfect oval! You see what taste he has! And with my gray eyes, and Edward says they are so beautiful! No, there is no one like him to lie and say agreeable things to one. It is true that at this moment, with joy and the heat of the fire, my eyes *do* shine in a way — I want to be very pretty, even prettier — for him. And he doesn't come! How late he is! Now that I want him to come, he doesn't. Now you see how he doesn't come! Oh, men, how selfish and bad they are!

Scene V

(*Enter* Edward)

Inez (*running to meet him*).— Edward! Edward!

Edward.— Inez! Darling!

Inez.— What a time to come!

Edward (*in a humble tone*).— I always come at two o'clock.

Inez.— And it is three.

Edward.— Is it possible! (*Looks at his watch.*) No, sweetheart, quarter of two.

Inez (*firmly*).— Three o'clock.

Edward pointing to his watch).— Quarter of two. Are you convinced? (*Pointing to the clock on the mantelpiece.*) And that says the same time.

Inez (*offended*).— Very well; you're right. You are a fond lover if you

dole out the moments to me; if every hour seems early for you to come to me and late to leave me; if you control your heartbeats by the balance of your watch.

Edward (*pleadingly*).— Inez!

Inez.— Go away — go away! Why it's not two o'clock yet — it's quarter of. Go out and take a walk and come back at two *exactly*.

Edward.— Inez.

Inez.— But that is the hour at which you *usually* come! That's the climax! What would the Astronomical Observatory say if you were ahead of time?

Edward.— Please forgive me! I was wrong.

Inez.— No, if anyone has lacked forethought, I have. My wishes outstripped the clock — and what do you do to punish me? You show me your watch! (*With a sudden gesture of imitation.*) What a poetic lover you are!

Edward.— I confess my fault and I repent, and I ask your pardon.

Inez.— Well, you admit it? That's better.

Edward.— The fact is that I was so happy, so joyful that I didn't know what I said, and even now I don't know what I'm saying.

Inez.— I was unjust in accusing you too, Edward, but I was so happy, so happy — I wanted you to come so much — that the seconds seemed centuries to me.

Edward.— I want you to know, dearest ——

Inez (*without listening to him*).— I have great news for you.

Edward.— That at last we are happy.

Inez.— Now I believe it; happy for all our lives.

Edward.— Why, it doesn't seem true!

Inez.— Because my father has promised that to-day, this very day, do you understand? But you're not even listening to me!

Edward (*without heeding her*).— Because my mother ——

Inez.— Your mother! What?

Edward.— Will come within half an hour to discuss our marriage.

Inez.— She? The duchess?

Edward (*with mock solemnity*).— The Duchess de Almonte will have the honor of asking the Avendaños for this white hand (*takes her hand*) for her son Edward; although Edward has already taken possession of it and pressed it to his heart, and it will not be likely that he will let it go even if it isn't given to him.

Inez.— She — she is going to come? They were right — yes, that woman is a saint!

Edward.— That woman is my mother; she loves me with all her heart,

and when I greeted her this morning she burst into tears, and yielded to my request. She values the glorious deeds of her ancestors highly. Honor is her religion, and she would prefer my death to my union with one whose name bore the slightest stain; but she appreciates your father's worth, his scientific achievements, his ——

Inez.— All right, all right; enough of compliments. From all this I infer that she will come this very day, that we shall be married very soon, and that we shall be very happy — shan't we? That is what matters; that is what matters most to me, I don't know about you.

Edward.— Do you doubt me?

Inez.— I don't doubt, but it is no small happiness for your mother to have yielded, because if she had not — You love me dearly, I know — but you — One owes a mother respect — And if she had said 'no' to you, like the good son that you are, you would not have displeased her, would you, Edward? And with deep sorrow you would have left your Inez, who loves you. Don't listen, don't let anyone hear it! — who loves you so much that without you — see if she isn't a little fool — she would have died of grief!

Edward.— My Inez.

Inez.— So then, now you see whether I should be grateful to your mother; because it is to her, not to you, that I owe my happiness.

Edward.— Heartless girl! Do you know what I should do if there were obstacles, do you?

Inez.— Yes; yield, leave me.

Edward.— Never that; for anything or anyone.

Inez.— Promise me that!

Edward.— I swear it by what is most sacred!

Inez.— How happy I am!

Edward— And I!

Scene VI

(*Enter* Jane, Lorenzo, *and* Thomas. Jane *appears in the door in the rear, supported by* Lorenzo, *and* Thomas, *stops for an instant to get her breath and then comes forward. She is wearing a shabby black dress.*)

Edward (*turning round*).— What a sombre group! Why does this dark cloud come to dull the blue of our sky?

Inez.— It is Jane, my father's nurse; you see it's a long story. I will tell you about it later.

Lorenzo.— Slowly, slowly, Jane.

Jane.— Who is this young lady?

Lorenzo.— My daughter, Inez. Come here, Inez. (Inez *goes up to them.* Edward *follows her.*)

Jane.— What a beauty! I think she is an angel! When I close my eyes forever if I see a being like you beside me, I shall think that I am in heaven.

Lorenzo.— One step more.

Thomas.— Just one effort; the last.

(*They reach the sofa and sit down on it, surrounding her.*)

Jane.— I should like to kiss her. (*Points to* Inez, *who comes still nearer.*) Jane *takes her hand and draws her closer.* No — your hand is hot and mine is cold — I must not kiss you — my kiss would be the kiss of death. (*She pushes* Inez *away gently and lets go her hand.*) I shall kiss you with my heart, not with my lips.

Thomas (*in a low voice to* Inez *and* Edward).— Let us go, the poor soul wants to talk to him alone. (*To* Jane.) Good-by for now, and good courage; your troubles are over.

Jane.— Those of this world — yes.

Inez.— Poor woman! (*Stops for a moment to look at her.*)

Edward.— Come, Inez, dear.

(*Exit* Thomas, Inez *and* Edward *at the right.*)

Scene VII

Jane.— (*after a pause*) Have they gone now?

Lorenzo.— Yes, Jane dear, now we are alone.

Jane.— At last — at last the moment I have wanted so has come. Everything comes — but everything goes. Listen, Lorenzo; my life is going, going very fast, and first I must tell you many things. The first is that I am innocent; that I did not think — did not wish — that — (*in great distress.*)

Lorenzo.— I know it, Jane, I know it.

Jane.— You do not know. Everything is against me — everything.

Lorenzo.— Don't, please, don't excite yourself; forget, rest.

Jane.— Forget? Yes, I shall soon forget. Rest? I shall have so long a time to rest that to-day I want to live — although I suffer and weep. I want to carry to the grave tears and kisses and sobs to fill that silence and that solitude with something that will recall life. (*Pause.*) Therefore, I want to tell you something. But how, without preparing you? How, without having doubt come before the revelation, and suspicion before doubt, and a presentiment before suspicion, and before the presentiment that something, a shadow which projects into the soul what is coming from far off? You don't understand me, and I cannot explain myself, although for forty years I have had the same idea, so you see I ought to explain these things well.

Lorenzo.— Say what you like, but don't excite yourself.

Jane.— Yes, I will say it. How can I die without telling you? In the first place, to convince you that I was not a wretched — thief — (*hides her face*).

Lorenzo.— Hush! Don't say that word.

Jane.— And, besides, because the only comfort that remains for me is to open my heart to you. Forgive me, Lorenzo. The dying are so selfish! For you it will be a terrible grief, and for me it will be a supreme joy.

Lorenzo.— How can your joy mean my grief, dear Jane?

Jane.— How can it be? But it will be, it will, my son — my son! Let me call you by that name. You won't be angry, will you?

Lorenzo.— No, indeed, Jane!

Jane.— Then I shall call you son, and you will call me mother. Call me mother. Whether heaven or hell rejoice you must call me mother.

Lorenzo.— My Mother!

Jane.— No, not that — but this way. Oh, it is cruel!

(*Starts towards* Lorenzo, *but restrains herself and falls back on the sofa.*)

Lorenzo.— Poor woman! She is out of her head!

Scene VIII

(*Enter* Inez *from the rear, running and radiantly happy. She comes up to her father, much excited and hardly articulating the words.*)

Inez.— Father — father — the duchess — has come — has come — can't you guess?

Lorenzo.— She?

Inez.— Yes. To settle that matter. Edward has conquered.

Lorenzo.— How splendid! My Inez! At last God granted ——

Inez.— Are you glad?

Lorenzo.— And you? (*Putting his arm round her.*)

Inez.— I — if you are glad — then let's go — quickly ——

Jane (*clinging to* Lorenzo).— No, I don't want you to go, you mustn't leave me.

Lorenzo.— I will go at once (*to* Inez).

Inez.— Don't wait — please don't wait — if she should take offence.

Lorenzo.— Don't be afraid; have Angela receive her in the reception-room with all ceremony. I will take Jane to her room and come at once.

(*Exit* Inez *in the rear.*)

Scene IX

Lorenzo (*wishes to carry her, but she resists*).— Come, Jane, come and rest, by-and-by we will talk as much as you like.

Jane.— By-and-by — no. What if I should die first.

Lorenzo (*impatiently*).— Don't think of such a thing.

Jane.— It is twenty years since I have seen you, and now they do not leave you with me a single instant. They are very cruel!

Lorenzo.— In a little while, my dear Jane. (*Tries to lift her.*)

Jane.— And you too want to go away? You, too! Ah, but I will make you stay with me!

Lorenzo.— Jane!

Jane.— Listen — only to this; then go if you like; I, *I* took the locket.

Lorenzo.— You?

Jane.— Yes.

Lorenzo.— Why?

Jane.— So that you shouldn't see it.

Lorenzo.— And why?

Jane.— Because inside it there was a paper, and on it were some words written by your mother — and I did not want you to read them.

Lorenzo.— And those words were?

Jane.— I know them by heart. They were: 'Lorenzo, my son, in the shrine that stands at the head of my bed there is hidden a letter in a sealed envelope. When I am dead open it, read what I wrote during one remorseful night; forgive me, and may God inspire you.'

Lorenzo.— 'Forgive me, and may God inspire you!' did you say? (*Wildly.*)

Jane.— Yes.

Lorenzo (*with increasing curiosity*).— And I heard something, too, about remorse.

Jane.— Remorse was the word. Now, go away if you like.

Lorenzo (*thoughtfully*).— No. (*Pause.*) And this letter?

Jane.— It was no secret from me that your mother had written it but I did not know where it was hidden. By unceasing watchfulness I learned that she had something in the locket, and my suspicions intuitively told me what was in the paper. That is why I took the locket. It was my lawful booty; that secret had cost me twenty years of the bitterest and most intolerable sorrow imaginable.

Lorenzo.— Pardon — remorse — a secret — my mother — I don't see what you mean. Dark shadows flit through my mind, and like flashes of pain pierce my heart. You are mad and you are driving me mad.

Jane.— No.

Lorenzo.— But that letter hidden in the shrine ——

Jane.— Belonged to me, and you did not see it because it was better

for you. As your mother was dying, what did it matter to her? I told you that there is nothing more selfish than death.

Lorenzo.— But that letter?

Jane.— I have it.

Lorenzo.— Here?

Jane.— Here (*puts her hand over her heart*), here. See, it is nothing but a piece of paper, and yet it weighs so heavily upon my heart!

Lorenzo.— Then I will see it.

Scene X

(*Enter* Thomas *in the background.*)

Thomas.— Lorenzo! Lorenzo!

Lorenzo.— What? (*In a sharp and impatient tone.*) What do you want?

Thonas.— The duchess has come.

Lorenzo.— What if she has?

Thomas (*aside*).— What a tone! (*Aloud.*) Come and receive her.

Lorenzo.— I am coming now.

Jane.— Don't leave me! As you hope to be saved, don't. (*In a whisper*): If you only knew ——

Thomas.— Are you coming?

Lorenzo.— Yes — but — but don't bother me — I tell you I'm coming.

Jane.— Don't go — and I will tell you everything — everything. I will give you that letter — the letter your mother wrote twenty years ago. It is her writing, her signature — you shall see it — but don't leave me.

Thomas (*more and more impatient*).— Come, Lorenzo!

Lorenzo.— I have told you that I am coming — coming at once. I know when I must go. Now go away. (To Jane): Give me the letter.

Jane.— When that man has gone.

Lorenzo (*to* Thomas, *angrily*).— Go away!

Thomas.— But the duchess ——

Lorenzo.— She can wait. Does she never make anyone wait in her hall? Is hers better than mine?

Thomas.— Are you in your right mind?

Lorenzo.— Yes, but not according to you. Go, this minute!

Thomas.— What's the matter, Lorenzo? (*Goes up to him with concern.*)

Lorenzo.— Nothing, nothing — I am tired of listening to you. Once for all — leave me!

Thomas.— All right — all right — but what on earth is the matter with the man?

Scene XI

Lorenzo.— Now we are alone!

Jane.— Lorenzo!

Lorenzo.— What — you hesitate! I will leave you! You promised to give me that letter! My daughter's future is waiting in that room, and yet an iron hand, the mailed hand of implacable fate, keeps me by your side. Bear in mind, Jane, that I am determined to learn this secret.

Jane.— Lorenzo!

Lorenzo.— The letter! Since my mother wrote it for me, it is mine!

Jane.— Don't be angry with me, my own Lorenzo. Here it is — this is it. (*Takes it out of her dress.*)

Lorenzo.— Here (*tries to take it*).

Jane.— Wait — wait — let me read it — I shall read more slowly than you, and so what is written here will not be such a shock to you.

Lorenzo.— Then read it. Go on!

Jane.— Yes, dear, but don't look on, just listen. (*Turns so that* Lorenzo *cannot see what is written on the paper, and reads*): 'Lorenzo, my son, forgive me.'

Lorenzo.— That again!

Jane (*goes on reading*).— I know that the end of my life is drawing near, and remorse has laid hold on me.' (*Pause.*)

Lorenzo.— Go on!

Jane.— 'I want to tell you the truth and I love you too much to tell you. Read in these tear-stained lines the secret of your existence, and then do as you like.'

Lorenzo.— The secret of my existence! Give me that letter! (*Wants to take it.*)

Jane.— No.

Lorenzo.— What is this mightmare, Jane? What iron band have you put round my forehead to hold my temples in an unbearable pressure? Give me that letter.

Jane.— No, never!

Lorenzo.— You shall! (*Takes the paper and reads with great excitement.*) 'Your father was rich, very rich; his estate amounted to millions. I was very poor; we had no children.' We had no children, she says!

Scene XII

(*Enter* Angela *hurriedly.*)

Angela.— The duchess!

Lorenzo (*utters a cry of anger.* JANE *snatches the paper from him and hides it*).— Again! Go away! What do you want?

Angela.— Lorenzo! Lorenzo —

Edward (*rushes in*).— Where is ——

Lorenzo.— You, too? Go away! All of you, go!

Angela.— What does this mean? What is it? What is the matter, Lorenzo? Recover yourself.

Lorenzo.— Go away — go — I implore you, go. I ask you on my knees if I must. But leave me — oh, human selfishness! People think there is nothing but their own passions and interests. Thomas! Angela! Edward! The Duchess! All of them! This torture is killing me like water dripping drop by drop upon the brain!

Edward.— You see my mother is coming ——

Angela.— The duchess is tired of waiting, is coming here ——

Edward.— She says that she wants to beard the scholar in his den.

Lorenzo.— Then let her come, but you — leave me! Go, or I shall go mad with despair.

Angela (*to* EDWARD).— No, it is impossible; your mother cannot see him in this condition.

Edward.— Come, then, come. Let's gain time, we will stop her in the corridor, and see if meanwhile Inez can succeed in calming him.

(*Exit* ANGELA *and* INEZ *in the rear.*)

SCENE XIII

Lorenzo.— The letter! That fatal letter, where is it? You have it.

Jane.— Yes. (*Produces the letter.*)

Lorenzo.— Then give it to me. We had no children, she said! (*Tries to read but cannot.*) Where is it? I don't know — I can't see the letters! There is a cloud before my eyes! We had no children! I can't — I can't! You read it — I beg of you. (JANE *takes the letter.*) There — there — where it says 'We had no children!'

Jane (*reading*).— 'My husband knew that a fatal disease was rapidly undermining his health. The unhappy man lived with death in his heart. Madly in love with me, he wished to secure for me all his fortune, and I — did wrong, I realize it now; I did wrong because he had a father, but I — forgive me, Lorenzo, you who are so good and honorable; I yielded.' (*Pause.*)

Lorenzo.— Go on — go on ——

Jane.— 'We hunted for a son — I cannot, I cannot write any more. Jane knows this secret. Jane will tell you all. Once more I ask you to

forgive me. Good-by, Lorenzo, and may He inspire you. I have loved you like a son, although you were not ours.'

Lorenzo.— I — I — I was not! What is that? I was not her son! I bear a name that is not mine! For forty years I have lived on another's property. I have stolen it all — social position, name, wealth! All, all! Even the caresses of my mother, since she was not my mother! Even her kisses, since I was not her son. No, it's not possible! I am not so base. Jane, Jane, I will have the truth from you. See, it is not for myself now. I am in God's hands; it is for my family, for those unhappy women, for my daughter, my own little Inez — she would die, and she must not die! (*Breaks down in despair.*)

Jane.— It is true, yes; but don't say anything. What does it matter if no one knows about it?

Lorenzo.— But — is it true?

Jane (*in a low voice*).— It is.

Lorenzo.— I can hardly believe it! That woman who loved me so much was not my mother?

Jane.— No. Your mother loved you still more!

Lorenzo.— Who was she?

Jane.— Lorenzo!

Lorenzo.— What is her name?

Jane.— Look at me without anger, and I will tell you.

Lorenzo.— Where is she?

Jane.— Struggling in the tortures of hell!

Lorenzo.— Did she die, too?

Jane.— She is dying!

(*During the last part of this dialogue* Jane *has risen, and she and* Lorenzo *face each other almost beside themselves. As she utters the last phrase, she falls in a heap on the sofa.*)

Lorenzo.— Jane!

Jane (*writhing with anguish*).— Not that name, not that!

Lorenzo.— Mother!

Jane.— Yes, that name — oh, my son! (*With a last effort she raises herself and throws her arms around* Lorenzo.)

Scene XIV

Thomas.— She is here now — she is coming ——

Jane (*releasing herself from* Lorenzo's *arms*).— Let me go — they are coming — and they mustn't see me.

Lorenzo.— No — wait — I don't know what I am going to say to you, but I have many things to say!

Jane.— Later on, good bye! Now I can die! I have called you son! (*She goes slowly towards the door on the right.* LORENZO *follows her.* THOMAS *watches them from the background.*)

Lorenzo.— No, not yet. (JANE *disappears behind the curtains.* LORENZO *is about to follow her.* THOMAS *steps forward, detains him by force, blocks his way, and forces him to come back.*)

SCENE XV

(*Enter the* DUCHESS, ANGELA, INEZ, *and* EDWARD.)

Duchess (*with exquisite courtesy*).— Mr. Avendaño? (*Pause.*)

Lorenzo.— Avendaño, Avendaño! I don't know where he is, madam. (*Speaks in a depressed tone and rather absently.*)

Angela (*aside*).— What is he talking about?

Inez.— What does this mean?

Duchess.— I understand, Mr. Avendaño, the displeasure that my presence causes you. I am here to ask you for the thing dearest to your heart (*indicating* INEZ), and I really don't wonder that you treat me as an enemy.

Lorenzo.— Fate is my enemy, no one else!

Inez (*aside*).— What does this mean?

Duchess.— You are right; it is the implacable enemy of parents.

Lorenzo.— And even more implacable to the children!

Duchess.— I do not deny it; but after all, divine laws govern human sorrows, and we must respect them. (*Tries to give a different trend to the conversation, but does not succeed in concealing her astonishment.*)

Lorenzo.— Alas, madam, these divine laws are more brutal at times than they could be if they were the work of human cruelty!

(*The* DUCHESS *makes an impatient gesture;* EDWARD *goes up to her;* INEZ *goes over to her father;* ANGELA *and* THOMAS *watch in astonishment.*)

INEZ (*aside to* LORENZO).— Please, father!

Edward (*aside to the* DUCHESS).— Mother, mother, for my sake!

Duchess (*haughtily and speaking rather dryly*).— I am a mother, I adore my son, I know that his happiness is out of the question if he does not share it with your daughter, and I prefer having two children to losing one.

Inez (*aside to* LORENZO).— See how kind she is, father!

Lorenzo.— It is a horrible misfortune to lose a child!

Duchess (*gently and advancing towards* LORENZO).— Are you willing to call my child yours too?

Inez (*imploringly and in a low tone*).— Answer, father.

Lorenzo (*stands looking at his daughter, takes her head between his hands,*

and gazes at her again passionately).— How beautiful you are! It seems incredible that the laws of honor are more powerful with me than you are!

Duchess (*unable to restrain herself*).— In short, Mr. Avendaño, do you wish my son, the duke of Almonte, to give his name to Miss Inez?

Lorenzo (*in a wild outburst*).— If I were a scoundrel, it would be a good chance to give the name of another to one who has none of her own!

Inez.— Father!

Thomas.— Lorenzo!

Angela.— Lorenzo!

Duchess.— I must frankly confess that I understand neither your answers nor your attitude, which is quite different from what I expected; and I limit myself to asking you for the last time, do you accept?

Lorenzo.— I am an honorable man; misfortune can conquer but not degrade me. Duchess, this marriage is impossible.

Duchess (*insulted and retreating a step*).— What!

Inez.— What are you saying? — father! — Impossible!

Lorenzo.— Yes, impossible! Beacuse I am not an Avendaño; because my parents were not my parents; because this house is not my house; because, dear child, I can give you nothing but a name that has been jeered at and disgraced; because I am the most unhappy man alive and I will not be the basest.

Inez.— Father, father! Why do you torture me? (*Collapses in the arm-chair.*)

Angela.— Madman, what have you done?

Lorenzo.— Inez! Inez! Lord, you are victor; but have mercy on me!

(*All surround* Inez.)

ACT II

(*The same setting as in Act I. It is night. The fire is lighted. A lamp with a screen stands on the study-table.*)

Scene I

Edward (*is seen listening at the door on the right, then comes to the center of the stage*).— Not a sound. I wonder if she has come to? Oh, to think how near we are to death in this life! (*Pause.*) And they think that I will give up my sweet Inez! They suppose that I will believe that ridiculous story that Mr. Lorenzo tells. Poor scholar! How does he know what he is talking about? (*Short pause.*) And even if what he says is true, wouldn't Inez still be the loveliest and most lovable of women? She shall be mine, although I have to crawl at my mother's feet. Mr. Lorenzo shall give in if

we have to put a gag and strait-jacket on him; and that poor beggar, who infected the erckless philosopher with her ravings, shall go away from here, far from all of us. If only Inez recovers from the shock her father gave her.

(*Again goes to the door and listens.*) Nothing — only silence; always this silence. (*Comes back to the center of the stage.*) Her father, oh, her father, God forgive me, I almost hate him. (*Gradually becoming more excited.*) Lunatic, how he took pleasure in torturing her! Her father, senseless scholar, atheist with pretensions to sanctity, new Don Quixote with less wit and more pedantry, false Bayard of honor! What kind of a father is he who, by rending the heart of his daughter, thinks he is gaining a reputation for goodness? If that is virtue, I think crime is more attractive! No one comes, and the hours go by,— I hear some one coming.

Scene II

(*Enter on the right the* Duchess.)

Edward.— Mother! How is Inez? Has she come to her senses?

Duchess.— At last, thank heaven. Poor girl! I didn't want to leave till the danger was over, but she is all right now. And now, my boy ——

Edward.— Now I must see her.

Duchess.— Edward!

Edward.— And then we must talk to Mr. Lorenzo, and then ——

Duchess.— And then you are going to exhaust my patience. I have done for you all that self-respect, dignity, and convention permitted, and even more; but the moment has come for you to show you are a man, to remember who you are and to heed the voice of duty.

Edward.— You are right; I shall do what I ought; but I don't know — forgive me, mother — whether we interpret my duty in the same way.

Duchess.— You must give Inez up forever.

Edward.— Why? Because she is poor?

Duchess.— No, not that.

Edward.— Then why, mother? Because Mr. Lorenzo is attempting such a superhuman act that if he accomplishes it his name will become eternal in books and histories, and he may even be placed among the saints, who knows?

Duchess.— You are joking, and that is a good sign.

Edward.— I want to show you that I am keeping cool. And besides, we must either take Mr. Lorenzo as a joke or shut him up in an asylum.

Duchess.— Don't say things like that, Edward; I don't like to have you talk that way. Although there is some exaggeration, much impulsiveness, and a certain melodramatic appearance in Mr. Avendaño's plans, we cannot fail to see that his conduct is that of an honorable man.

Edward.— Why does he rejoice in his daughter's unhappiness?

Duchess.— Because he obeys divine laws, without heeding human passions.

Edward.— Then if Mr. Lorenzo is so honorable, and the glory of noble deeds is inherited, my betrothed is rich in inherited nobility.

Duchess.— And rich in inherited dishonor, too. (*In a low tone and walking up to her son.*) Inez has no name, good or bad, because she does not know what her father's name is, and that woman's is on the shameful records of a house of correction for the crime of theft.

Edward.— Hush!

Duchess.— To be the grandchild of a humble nurse, an accomplice in having usurped a social position, is the future for that poor girl, if what Mr. Lorenzo says is so. Perhaps it is an excess of aristocratic pride to refuse such a noble alliance, but I am impelled to do so by those prejudices which you, educated in modern ideas, consider old-fashioned.

Edward.— But, mother, I love Inez.

Duchess.— You are mad, my son.

Edward.— They say that love is madness; so, then, it is no wonder that I am mad.

Duchess.— Yes, you are, and you are making me lose my mind.

Edward.— Do you prefer losing me?

Duchess.— Enough, Edward, let us leave this house, which you entered for the first time in an evil hour.

Edward.— But, tell me, isn't Inez an angel?

Duchess.— The poor girl seemed to me an angel when I came, an angel of sorrow as I leave her.

Edward.— Doesn't everyone admit that Mr. Lorenzo is a learned man, and don't you say that he is a saint?

Duchess.— It would be unjust to deny that he has very great talent and unstained honor.

Edward.— Then the trouble is not with them?

Duchess.— It is not.

Edward.— Then can't the scandal be avoided? (*Goes up to her and speaks in a low tone.*) Who knows about this wretched story, whether it is true or false, and it seems more false than true to me? We do, and we will be silent. Mr. Thomas, and he is like one of the family. That unhappy woman, and in a few short hours her lips will be sealed in eternal silence. Mr. Lorenzo, and, after all, he is a father and will do for his daughter what you are not willing to do for me. Mother, why seek despair and death when happiness is within our reach?

Duchess.— But don't you see, my poor boy, don't you see how the

contact with crime changes the noblest characters? Don't you realize that you are proposing an infamous thing to me — that you want to make me the accomplice in a felony? What can they have done to my son that he says such things and cherishes such ideas?

Edward.— Well, who is talking about infamy, and who is proposing a felony? Is Mr. Lorenzo making us all lose our minds, or does torturing me amuse you?

Duchess.— Weren't you talking about avoiding a scandal by keeping silent?

Edward.— Yes.

Duchess.— Well, then?

Edward.— Mother, listen to what I said or meant to say. If Mr. Lorenzo's story is true, which I doubt, he can secretly and cautiously hunt for the rightful heirs of this accursed fortune, and present them with it in some form.

Duchess.— But under what pretext?

Edward.— If he were asking for a fortune it would not be easy to find an excuse; don't worry about a lack of reasons for giving it away; any reason at all will seem equally good to the recipient.

Duchess.— Inez will have a name which does not belong to her.

Edward.— She will have mine, which is as good as any.

Duchess.— Yes, you are right there! But Mr. Lorenzo ——

Edward.— Leave him in peace, for he has enough to do with his philosophies. Let us think about ourselves, and realize that everything, everything, can be arranged if you consent. One word from you revives poor Inez; it gives me new life, for your cruelty snatched from me what your love gave me; it restores happiness to this unhappy family, and without any scandal or attracting any attention the appropriated fortune returns to its rightful owners. Where is the infamy or the felony there?

Duchess.— You cast a spell upon me, Edward; I don't know what to say to you, but a voice within warns me that this is neither just nor right; that a fiction is never preferable to truth; that in Mr. Lorenzo, in spite of his ravings, duty triumphs; that in you, in spite of your arguments, passion triumphs.

Edward.— But why? Tell me that.

Duchess.— I can't discuss it with you, Edward.

Edward.— What you can't do is love me.

Duchess.— You say that I don't love you! That is cruel! You don't believe it as you say it, but it makes me wretched to hear it.

Edward.— Then yield.

Duchess.— My son, I beg of you!

Edward.— You are going to give in, that is evident; your face is pale, there are tears in your eyes, your lips are trembling. (*In a caressing tone.*) Aren't your lips moving now to say yes to me? Why not? Is there anything in my idea that does not harmonize absolutely with that ideal of moral perfection that you and Mr. Lorenzo cherish? Is there anything wrong in my plan?

Duchess.— Yes, Edward.

Edward.— It must be very little — an atom, a shade, a gram! And am I not worth your doing one little bit of wrong for me? Find among the people some one whom you treat with cold scorn, and from whom your aristocratic training separates you like a deep gulf; find a mother and ask her if for her son's life she would not stifle in a cry of love all those delicate conscientious scruples?

Duchess (*in a passionate outburst*).— What another mother will do I am capable of doing, too!

Edward (*his arms around her*).— Thank you, thank you, mother!

Duchess.— But ——

Edward.— You have said it, you have said it. (*Hurries on so as not to let her speak.*) And besides, perhaps this is not at all necessary. Who assures us that Mr. Lorenzo's story is true? What material proofs are there? None that we know of. The words of a woman who is raving in her last agony. And is that enough?

Duchess.— No, indeed.

Edward.— Well, we haven't even that, because Mr. Thomas has not yet been able to question Jane. Do we know whether she said it, or whether Mr. Lorenzo dreamed it? His mind is overstrained.

Duchess.— It must be.

Edward.— How excited, how strange he was!

Duchess.— I thought that he had gone mad.

Edward.— And he may be mad. All those scholars end by going insane. Even Mr. Thomas realizes, even his wife admits, that Mr. Lorenzo does not talk like other men.

Scene III

(*Enter* Angela *from the right.*)

Angela.— I beg of you, don't leave us yet; Inez wants to see you; she is crying and calling for you; you are her only comfort.

Duchess.— Poor child!

Angela.— We could not prevent her getting up, because her nervous excitement was so great that it was terrifyng; then she wanted to come and find you, but her strength failed her. Come, Duchess, come and comfort my

daughter, an unhappy mother asks this of you, who are such a loving mother.

Edward.— And you are going to tell her that there is still hope, that everything depends on Mr. Lorenzo, aren't you?

Angela.— What? Can it be true? (*Goes toward the* DUCHESS *and takes her hands effusively.*)

Edward.— Yes; I will explain. (*To* ANGELA): You will have to put it decidedly to your husband.

Duchess.— But — (EDWARD, *without listening to his mother, walks away with* ANGELA, *and they talk in low tones. Aside*): This boy of mine does what he likes with me! What am I to say to the good lady if he assures her that I agree with him? What a state of things! And the girl is both beautiful and attractive. Poor Inez! And her father possessed, or did possess, a royal fortune — human grandeur and vanity!

Angela.— I understand — I understand. (*To* EDWARD, *then turns to the* DUCHESS. *How grateful I am to you for your kindness!*) Tell my dear Inez the good news at once; meanwhile, I will try to have Lorenzo consent, and he shall consent. Yes, he must. Either he has no heart or he must consent.

Edward.— Let us go, mother.

Duchess.— How will this end!

Edward.— How good you are!

(*Exit the* DUCHESS *and* EDWARD *at the right.*)

SCENE IV

(*Enter* LORENZO *from the left.*)

Lorenzo.— In that room my mother is dying, and there my only child — what can I do? (*He turns slowly to the door on the right, but as he is about to enter* ANGELA *stops him*

Angela.— Where are you going, Lorenzo?

Lorenzo.— To see my daughter.

Angela.— Impossible — now she has recovered and your presence might do her much harm; as much at least as that which your words caused her.

Lorenzo.— But I want to see her.

Angela.— You must not see her; and although duty always rules you, you will respect poor Inez' solitary tears, not for my wish, which is nothing before yours, but (*sarcastically*) for your own reflecting will.

Lorenzo.— You are right. (*Pause. Both come to the center of the stage.*) My dear daughter! What does she say about me?

Angela.— Nothing.

Lorenzo.— Doesn't she blame me?

Angela.— I do not know what sorrow may murmur in the bottom of her heart.

Lorenzo. That I should have been her executioner! I to destroy all her hopes, I to have wounded her heart!

Angela.— You are perfectly conscious of your work, Lorenzo. So much the better if remorse helps you to reparation.

Lorenzo.— How unhappy I am!

Angela.— You unhappy! She is the unhappy one, not you who in the contemplation of your moral perfections and lofty virtues will surely find ineffable joys and divine comfort. (*Bitterly.*)

Lorenzo.— How badly you judge me and how you misunderstand me!

Angela.— I judge you badly; I who humbly admire the results of your saintliness! I misunderstand you! In that you are quite right (*sarcastically*); for superior beings like you are out of the range of ordinary intelligences like mine.

Lorenzo.— Angela, your words pierce my heart like sharp daggers.

Angela.— Your heart? Impossible!

Lorenzo.— But what did you want me to do? Speak out, advise, decide, enlighten my mind, which is groping about in darkness.

Angela.— What did I want you to do? What I want now. I want you to save your daughter's life; not to bring forward any more obstacles to her marriage; not to irritate the Duchess's pride by brutal and useless revelations; not to prevent with a new scandal the remedy of the harm you have done.

Lorenzo.— In fact, you want me to be silent.

Angela.— Yes, I want you to be silent.

Lorenzo.— But that would be infamous.

Angela.— I don't know; I feel; I don't discuss.

Lorenzo.— My whole being rebels before this idea! I, an accomplice of the most repugnant of crimes, the most cowardly! I to enjoy stolen wealth, and a false name, and blessings which are not ours because God did not wish that they should be, and since he did not wish it, they must not be, Inez and you and I, all sunk in the mire! Is this what you advise? (*Gradually becomes more and more excited.*) Then goodness is a lie; then you, the beings whom I loved most in the world, because in you I saw something divine, you are wretched egoists, reluctant to make a sacrifice, a prey to greed, playthings of passions; then—you are earthly, only earthly! Then if you are earth, dissolve into dust, and let the whirlwind carry us away!

Angela.— Lorenzo!

Lorenzo (*with extreme violence*).— Beings without conscience and without free-will are atoms that are united to-day and are separated to-morrow! There goes matter, let it go!

Angela.— You are raving, Lorenzo! I do not understand you! I do not know what you want!

Lorenzo.— To respect truth and justice.

Angela.— Truth?

Lorenzo.— Yes.

Angela.— And shall you proclaim it to everyone?

Lorenzo.— I shall tell it.

Angela.— And shall you leave us in poverty?

Lorenzo.— I will support you by my labor.

Angela.— You support? A scholar's vanity! Listen, Lorenzo. If this fortune is not yours, return it — well and good. (LORENZO *utters a cry of joy and approaches* ANGELA *with open arms.*) Poverty does not frighten me, nor am I the base and selfish woman whom you described a while ago.

Lorenzo.— Angela, my dear Angela, forgive me.

Angela.— Do you wish my pardon? Do you want me to still bless, as I have always blessed, the hour when I became your wife?

Lorenzo.— Yes.

Angela.— Well, then, fulfill your duty as an honorable man, but silently, prudently, noiselessly, without any talk or scandal.

Lorenzo.— And why? The Duchess will not wish, even in that case, that Edward should be my daughter's husband.

Angela.— Edward answers for his mother's consent.

Lorenzo.— She will not yield.

Angela.— She will yield; she is a woman. Not all attain your perfection.

Lorenzo.— I do not believe it.

Angela.— Don't you believe it, or do you fear it?

Lorenzo.— But even supposing that she should yield, how am I to keep a name that is not mine!

Angela.— Oh, those abominable subtleties to which you are sacrificing Inez' life!

Lorenzo.— A name, Angela, is in society ——

Angela.— A name is a sound, a movement of the air, something transitory; human vanity! and a daughter is a being made of our own flesh and blood, a being whom we received in our arms when she came into the world; who gave us her first smile and her first kiss and her first tears; a being whom we love more than ourselves, but without the leaven of selfish-

ness that abases our other loves; the only divine love that exists on earth, and that will also exist if heaven is heaven, there, beyond the blue, and in God himself. Choose now, impious man, between what you call a name and what you call a daughter.

Lorenzo.— Your words are driving me mad, Angela.

Angela.— Since you went mad for Inez's torture, is it strange that you should go mad for her happiness?

Lorenzo.— Angela — Angela — in part — yes, you are right — I am a poor lunatic, my scruples are perhaps exaggerated. My child, my Inez, so good, so beautiful! And it would kill her, yes, it would kill her.

Angela.— At last — Lorenzo! My dear Lorenzo!

Lorenzo.— Wait, my ideas are confused — a whirlwind of fire is spinning in my brain! Nevertheless, I understand that it is not enough to renounce the property that I possess; I must tell why I renounce it.

Angela.— Lorenzo!

Lorenzo (*without listening to her, and as if talking to himself*).— On the other hand, I return materially the fortune, but without recognizing the lawful right of the people whom I have despoiled; then what ought to be restored in all its integrity, I restore in a traitorous and cowardly manner, and sheltered by another empty and false right which I invented for my convenience and for the benefit of my family.

Angela.— Just so many bombastic words, Lorenzo!

Lorenzo (*without heeding her*).— In keeping a name that is not mine, I am a mere thief; I must say it if the word burns my lips. I steal a name and a right; I deprive my victims of their most powerful means of defense against the greed which may awake at any time in my descendants, and I give rise to fresh iniquity in the future. Do you see that? Do you see it, wife? I must tell the truth, the whole truth; I must proclaim it whatever may be the consequences.

Angela.— Lorenzo!

Lorenzo.— Would a judge, a jury, despoil me by their decision only of my property or of my property and my name together? Of both, wouldn't they? Then what a judge would do, I, judge of myself, must do or be a criminal. In that, unhappy woman, you hear what my conscience cries to me. No, I do not want to be half honorable, because in all that is not wholly honorable, I shall be wholly infamous. These things seem very plain; there is nothing more simple than duty.

Angela.— But then, if the facts are made public, the Duchess will not consent.

Lorenzo.— She will not consent; I have already told you so.

Angela.— Oh, Lorenzo, Lorenzo; you are everything: philosopher,

moralist, lawyer, and an honest man, besides! Everything, poor thinking-machine, but a father!

Lorenzo.— You want to drive me mad, and you are going to succeed.

Angela.— That is impossible.

Lorenzo.— Am I mad?

Angela.— You are, and bear in mind that you have not yet reached the depths of the abyss. Listen to me, for I, too, understand something in this matter of logic — and, after all, I am your wife. Are you going to tell the truth, all the truth?

Lorenzo.— All.

Angela.— To human justice?

Lorenzo.— It seems useless to me to tell it to divine justice, which at this very moment is judging us both.

Angela.— Understand me, Lorenzo. I want to know if you are going to repeat all that you told us a little while ago to the judge, to the notary public, to those who are to take this property that you give up and deliver it to its owners.

Lorenzo.— Yes, I am going to tell it to them.

Angela.— And shall you tell the whole story?

Lorenzo.— It will be necessary.

Angela.— Wait a moment. You will have to say that this woman, your nurse Jane, is your mother.

Lorenzo.— In this way I shall wash away the stain that she suffered from an unfair sentence. This alone is enough to make the silence that you advise a crime.

Angela.— And this alone is enough to make silence a duty. Don't you see, misguided man, that if Jane is innocent of the crime of which she was accused, she is guilty of a greater crime? It is usurping social position! You know that very well. To take a false position in a family, thereby making it ridiculous and destroying it; to snatch an immense fortune from its lawful owners, which is rather more than picking up a locket from the ground; to conceal an illegitimate birth with an honorable name, which is covering the rottenness of vice with an ermine cloak! If Jane is your mother, Jane has done all this, and has persisted in her evil doing for forty years.

Lorenzo (*rushes away from* ANGELA, *holding his head in both hands*).— Hush, hush, I implore you!

Angela.— That is what I ask of you; to be silent.

Lorenzo.— She is my mother!

Angela.— What does it matter? Why must the man who sacrifices an innocent daughter respect a guilty mother? Aren't divine laws superior

to human? Aren't justice, duty, truth the primary considerations? Mustn't the laws of the soul prevail over the weakness of the flesh?

Lorenzo.— You are right, but although you are in the right, you are mad.

Angela.— Why? Look out, you are becoming as base and weak as this poor mother. Doesn't duty demand that you should let your daughter die? Then let her die. Doesn't duty demand that you yourself should drag Jane, even on her death-bed, to prison? Then, off with the old woman! Now you see how I, too, have my logic.

Lorenzo.— A hellish logic!

Angela.— And yours, from what higher sphere did that descend?

Lorenzo (*rushing away fron* ANGELA).— Leave me — go away — I can bear no more. My darling Inez! My mother! What harm did I do you, Angela, that you should torture me so? (*Drops limply into the arm-chair near the table.*) My head is on fire!

Angela (*gently*).— Lorenzo, Lorenzo!

Lorenzo.— Yes, you are right — yes, I am only a lunatic. How do I know what I must do? All is darkness! What is truth? What is falsehood?

Angela (*aside*).— I was very cruel, but I saved my child; he will not speak.

(LORENZO *is sitting in a heap in the arm-chair; his arms are on the table, and his face is hidden in his hands.* ANGELA *goes up to him affectionately and speaks to him gently.*) Lorenzo, forgive me.

Lorenzo.— Go away, go away, I beg of you!

Angela.— I wanted to show you the abyss where you were falling; I wanted to save Inez; I wanted to save you from your own madness.

Lorenzo.— Yes, yes, Angela, I understand, but leave me.

Angela.— Do you forgive me?

Lorenzo.— I forgive you, and I love you. Poor Angela, you are suffering, too! But I want to be alone.

Angela.— Well, then, I am going; but don't grieve; we shall find some way of salvation yet. I shall tell Inez that you want to see her. Don't you want to take her in your arms?

Lorenzo (*in a submissive tone*).— If she is willing ——

Angela.— Then wait for me here, I will come and call you; and then near our poor girl, all united, animated by the same desire, combining our wills, you will see how we shall conquer the fatality that crushes us.

Lorenzo.— We shall conquer it, yes, we shall conquer it. (*He is repeating what he hears without knowing what he says.*)

Angela.— Good-by, and don't feel bitterly towards me.

Lorenzo.— Bitterly! Towards you!
Angela.— Good-by!

Scene V

(Lorenzo, *seated at the table, and with an air of deep dejection. The fire burns with a reddish light; the room seems filled with great shadows that are fantastically grouped in the hangings. Long pause.*)

Lorenzo.— Now I am alone. How many shadows there are everywhere! How little this light shines! It is better so; let the shadows thicken, let me be in darkness — there where conscience appears most luminous to us. I want the good, but I don't know where it is; my will is strong, but my reason is weak. Three names flash before my eyes in the dark night in which I struggle. Angela, Jane, Inez! My destiny leads me to my calvary, and without complaint I take up the cross of my sorrow. But you, beloved women, you, my Inez, why must you go before me, marking with your tears the road my feet must stain with blood? I alone, so be it, but not you. My God, help me, for the light of my conscience is dying down, my will is failing, despair is taking possession of my mind! I long for the right, and in Thee I seek it! Lord, come to me; come, for I call you! Shadows, that close me in; space in which I pace to and fro, driven by pain; time that for me is an eternity of sorrow; and terrible silence, that hears me with some pity — call, all of you to your God, for my voice does not reach him! Tell Him that I cannot let my daughter die, ask Him to take from her the cup of bitterness, and let my lips drain it all! All, all for me, not for her! She is so beautiful, so good, so pure! Not Inez —oh God, not Inez! (*Lets his hand fall on the table and weeps bitterly. Pause.*)

Scene VI

(Jane *appears in the door on the right, and stops there.*)

Lorenzo.— Shadowy figures have passed before my eyes. (*Pause.*) Can all this be a dream? No, Jane is in there, and the proof — the proof. (*Opens the writing-stand and takes out a letter*) — the proof is here. Unhappily it is not a dream. It is implacable and terrible reality. I have read it a hundred times, and yet I have not read it enough. 'I have loved you like a son, although you have not been ours.' Although you have not been ours!

Jane (*aside and watching him*).— He is reading — reading the letter of the one whom he believed to be his mother. I am his mother; I alone. (*Comes forward a few steps, although with difficulty.*) How sad his face is! Are there tears in his eyes? In his eyes? I cannot tell. Perhaps they are in mine as I look at him. They are in his eyes or in mine; I see tears

somewhere. (*Takes a few more steps.*) Is he weeping? Why? Because I am his mother? Perhaps he regrets my being his mother? But what does it matter if he alone knows my secret and if I am going to die? Yes, to die — to die very soon. Eternal and cold night is penetrating to the depths of my being; there is something very dark within me. (*Takes a few more steps, sways, and leans on the table in order not to fall.* LORENZO *turns towards her.*)

Lorenzo.— Jane!

Jane.— Always that name!

Lorenzo.— Mother!

Jane.— It angers you that I am your mother; I see it clearly.

Lorenzo.— That you should think that of me!

Jane.— Then if it is not anger it must be shame at having me for mother.

Lorenzo.— I ashamed? To-morrow everyone shall know that I am your son.

Jane.— To-morrow! What do you mean? My hearing is dulled already, and doubtless I did not understand what you said! (*Terrified.*)

Lorenzo.— I was wrong. Not to-morrow. First you must leave Spain, and when you are in a safe place (because at times the justice of men is very cruel) I shall announce the truth; and I shall give up a name that is not mine; I shall return stolen riches. Now the thing is settled.

Jane.— God help me!

Lorenzo.— And afterwards I will come to find you with Angela and my poor child.

Jane.— You in poverty, you in dishonor, you with a name only to be flouted and scorned? But why? Why? What compels you to do that? Speak, my son, for you are driving me mad. What?

Lorenzo.— My conscience, mother, and your guilt.

Jane.— Do you intend to tell the truth?

Lorenzo (*angrily*).— Why did you tell me? If I had known nothing about it, now I should not have to give my daughter her death-blow.

Jane.— Why? He asks me that! And he does not understand! Ungrateful! (*Hides her face in her hands and weeps bitterly.*)

Lorenzo.— Mother!

Jane.— Because I was going to die — because I am going to die — and first I had to tell you what this poor woman did for your happiness. Besides, once at least I wanted you to call me mother. For that, only for that, because something rose from my heart to my throat, I could not control myself, and I had to say to you: you are my son!

Lorenzo.— Mother, I understand you, and I do not accuse you.

Jane.— But you don't intend to do what you said, do you? It would be infamous for your family, it would be cruel to this poor old woman!

Lorenzo.— Cruel, yes; not infamous, for by this cruelty I blot out other infamies.

Jane.— Lorenzo!

Lorenzo.— Forgive me!

Jane (*astonished*).— Do you mean that I did an infamous thing?

Lorenzo.— I say nothing.

Jane.— But it was for you — for you — for you, my son! (*Her voice is gradually more smothered.* Lorenzo *remains silent, sombre, and does not turn towards his mother.*) God knows I did it for him, and this is how he repays me! Lorenzo!

Lorenzo.— Evil cannot prevail; the work of iniquity is crushed under its own weight; my sacrifice will wash away your sin.

Jane.— Lorenzo!

Lorenzo (*goes up to the light, puts the letter in her hand, and compels her to read*).— What does it say there?

Jane (*sits down and reads with difficulty*).— 'Forgive me, and may God inspire you."

Lorenzo.— Mother, I forgive her, and I have asked heaven for inspiration; your entreaties are useless.

Scene VII

(*Enter* Angela *from the right.*)

Angela (*from the door on the right and without entering the room*).— Lorenzo, Inez is calling for you.

Lorenzo.— She! My daughter. Yes, I am coming. Forgive me, mother, I will come back at once.

Jane (*stopping him and in a low tone*).— Now I know that you scorn me; now I know that you hate me.

Lorenzo.— Mother!

Jane.— But not for my sake, for hers, for your child ——

Lorenzo (*desperately*).— Not even for her!

Jane.— Ah! (*falls into the arm-chair and covers her face with her hands.* (*Exit* Lorenzo *and* Angela).

Scene VIII

Jane (*with the letter in her hand*).— Not even for her! (*Sobbing.*) Sacrifice yourself for your son; renounce his caresses; clench your hands

when you see him kiss another woman, and call her mother; swallow your bitter tears until your heart overflow or break; wear an infamous brand upon your forehead; exist on misery and sorrow in your attic for twenty years, your only comfort watching him from a distance as he drives past. Now, I am dying! (*Pause. Then she revives a little.*) But still — you, poor Jane, have suffered all this; and in exchange you make him rich, wise, famous, good, and at your last hour you come to him only to ask for a kiss, only to have him say to you: "How good you are; how much you have loved me!' And he doesn't say anything of the sort; he looks at you sadly and severely, he tells you that you did an infamous thing, that he must blot out your guilt, that your deed is the work of iniquity. The work of iniquity! Oh, Lorenzo, my son! Why are you so cruel? Why do you scornfully throw away all that I have given you at the cost of my happiness? See what bitter tears you make me shed! (*Her tone changes, she rises with an outburst of despair, and comes to the right.*) And my sacrifice will be useless! And I shall have lost my happiness and him as well! How mad and selfish I was! Why did I tell him the truth? (*Pause.*) But it must not be; it must not be; poor visionary, the work of iniquity does not yet threaten ruin. I will deny it all! (*In a smothered voice.*) You shall be rich and happy and powerful in spite of yourself. He put the only proof in my hands. (*Stretches her arm towards the table where the letter is.*) Good, good; his mother and his daughter will save him between them; strange coincidence! She calls him and obliges him to go away, and I remain. Now, to exhaust the strength I have left. Now I am getting there little by little, and through the shadows. It was dark like this the night my mistress came to my bedside and whispered: 'Do you want your son to be rich and happy?' And I hesitated, and then I said,' Yes.' And now — now, I say, yes. (*She reaches the table. Pause.*) Is Lorenzo coming back? (*Listen.*) Yes, I think he is coming — and he will ask me for the letter as he asked me for it before! Then — the fire —(*tries to walk and cannot*) I hear his voice — my strength is going — there is no time. He is coming! No, I won't give it to him. It is my property again. Ah, now I know! I will put a blank sheet inside the envelope, so that it won't be noticed at once. Lorenzo calls it the work of iniquity! My poor boy, at times he is as innocent as a child! So, I will leave the envelope where it is, and this is for the flames. (*Throws the letter into the fire and bends down to watch it burn.*) Now it is flame! The fire lights up the face of my old mistress. (*Looks at a picture on the wall.*) See — now it is ashes; and it was the only proof. The only one? No, another is left, for I am left, but very soon I shall be ashes too. (*Pause.*) Now I am going to my room (*takes a few steps*). My strength is ebbing (*with a great effort takes a few*

more steps). But I have saved him, he will be rich, happy. I cannot see, the light is going out. Is it going out, or is it my eyes? (*Goes to the table, takes the lamp, and again tries to walk.*) Light! Light! Where is my room? The shadows — darkness everywhere. Help, God, I am dying!

(*Drops the light, the room is only lighted by the reddish firelight. She falls between the fireplace and the table.*)

Scene IX

(*Enter* Lorenzo, Inez, Angela, *and the* Duchess *from the right.* Lorenzo *enters, as if fleeing from his daughter; she stops in the doorway. She is dressed in white; behind her and half hidden by the hangings are* Angela *and the* Duchess.)

Lorenzo (*coming to the center of the stage*).— No more, no more! It is the last trial! Yes, the last, but my will is weakening.

Angela (*aside to* Inez).— Follow him, don't leave him; he will give in.

Inez.— Why do you flee from me, father? (*She advances a few steps, followed by* Angela *and the* Duchess. *The whole scene is fantastic in movement and action.* Lorenzo *is in the center of the stage, showing by his attitude, gestures and tone that he is having a last and desperate struggle with himself.* Inez, *a beautiful and ideal figure, slowly approaches her father;* Angela *and the* Duchess, *dressed in black, follow her closely and prompt her.* Jane *is dying. The room is full of shadows, but the firelight falls upon* Inez.)

Lorenzo.— There is temptation! But, how beautiful she is! What a halo of divine beauty surrounds her! The only light amid so much shadow!

Angela (*aside to her daughter*).— Watch him. Now he cannot resist. Plead with him, plead, My Inez!

Inez (*advancing*).— Come to my arms!

Lorenzo (*retreating*).— Heaven help me if she twines them round my neck like a loving halter!

Jane (*aside in a weak voice*).— A halter round the neck — he is right —

Inez.— Father, I beg of you, by the love that you have for me, by the tears in my eyes that you loved so much and kissed so much when I was a little girl! (*Puts her hands to her face, then takes them down and gives them to her father to kiss.*) See, see how the tears fall from my eyelids! They are on my hands; kiss them, and you will feel upon your lips their bitterness.

Lorenzo.— Yes, I shall kiss them, but there will be no help for me, if a single tear of mine fall on your hands!

Jane (*aside*).— Fall! They said fall; I, too, am falling into a bottomless abyss. But first, first, I must embrace my son.

Inez.— Father! (LORENZO *retreats.* INEZ, ANGELA *and the* DUCHESS *follow him.*)

Jane.— They have said Lorenzo. There, there, I see something.——

Lorenzo.— No — no — I say no. Do you want to disgrace me?

Inez.— And you, father, who would believe it, you want to kill me! If you don't, why do you oppose this love which means life to me?

Lorenzo.— Not I, Inez — no. It is the Duchess.

Angela.— That is not true. The Duchess yields.

Lorenzo.— At the price of dishonor.

Duchess.— It is not true, Inez; in exchange for silence.

Inez.— Don't you hear, father mine!

Lorenzo (*repelling them and retreating*).— I only hear voices that call upon my conscience! I only see shadows that pursue me through the shadows! Phantoms, space-born of temptation — leave me! Go, go, for if you are strong to torture my heart, you are weak, too weak to turn my will!

Jane (*reaches him and holds out her arms to him*).— His voice! Lorenzo!

Lorenzo (*takes her in his arms*).— Mother!

Inez (*clinging to* ANGELA).— What is that voice? Who is that woman? What shadow rose from the darkness and clasped my father in its arms? I am afraid!

Lorenzo.— Jane! My mother!

Inez.— His mother! Why does he call her his mother?

Lorenzo.— Because she is my mother, and because — I must say it.

Jane.— I, his mother! I! What an idea! I should like — to be!

Duchess.— Do you hear what she says, do you?

Angela.— She denies it!

Lorenzo.— You are my mother! (*Violently.*)

Jane (*with a forced laugh*).— My poor Lorenzo! (*Whispering and holding him close.*) My own boy!

Lorenzo.— Repeat aloud what you whispered!

Jane.— I — whispered — what did I say to you? To be your mother, what greater happiness!

Lorenzo (*furious*).— What — you deny it?

Angela.— Lorenzo!

Lorenzo (*with increasing rage*).— Do you deny that you are my mother?

Jane.— And why not?

Lorenzo (*in despair*).— You disowned me when I was born, and you disown me again when you are dying!

Jane (*clings to him, and the two form a group so closely united that it is*

impossible in the darkness to tell whether or not LORENZO *is holding her against her will. In a weakened voice*).— My own son!

Lorenzo.— Again — again!

Jane.— I am dying!

Lorenzo.— No — mother!

Duchess.— Help! The man is going to kill her! Help! (*She runs towards the door on the right.*)

Angela.— Edward! Thomas!

Lorenzo.— Mother! Mother!

Jane.— No — not that — no!

SCENE X

(*Enter* THOMAS *and* EDWARD *from the right with lights. All rush forward and try to separate* LORENZO *from* JANE.)

Thomas.— Come, come!

Lorenzo.— My mother! Forgive, forgive. If you don't wish it, I won't call you mother, my mother!

Jane.— Good-by!

Lorenzo.— Jane!

Jane (*makes a terrible effort, starts, as if cut to the heart by the name of* JANE, *and falls.*)

Thomas.— Dead!

Lorenzo.— No — it is impossible! (*Clings to his mother*).— To kill her I called her mother! and the last word that she heard from my lips was Jane! My God, why do you punish me so, and why do you forsake me?

ACT III

(*The same setting as in the previous acts*)

SCENE I

Thomas.— All is quiet. I do not hear Inez crying, nor does Lorenzo's rage burst forth. The calm before the storm. (*Pause.*) There are moments when I doubt and hesitate. He — he — my good friend, my poor Lorenzo. This idea does not give me an instant's rest. After all, we shall know the truth very soon; meanwhile, courage, and I will fulfill for this distressed family sacred duties that no one can fulfill with a better will than I!

Servant.— A gentleman with two — er gentlemen — although their dress — in short, the gentleman gave me this card for you, and they are all waiting outside.

Thomas (*looking at the card*).— Ah! Dr. Bermudez! Show him in.

Servant.— And the other two?

Thomas.— Let them wait. (*Exit the* SERVANT.) As the moment comes nearer, my anxiety and my doubts increase. Poor Angela, what a shock! Poor Inez! What a state of nervous excitement the poor child is in! What a light there is in her eyes! What clearness in her judgments! No one explained to her what is happening, and I think she knows it all; and she guesses what she does not know, and suspects what she does not guess! No, this situation cannot be prolonged; let us face reality, however sad it is.

SCENE II

(*Enter* DR. BERMUDEZ.)

Thomas.— Doctor! (*Goes to meet him and shakes hands.*)

Doctor.— Thomas!

Thomas.— Punctual as usual.

Doctor.— No, I come beforehand, to install these two conveniently ——

Thomas.— Yes, yes, I understand.

Doctor.— I have had them dress, so that Mr. Avendaño will not suspect, because as it is only a matter of general precaution ——

Thomas.— Yes, indeed, all right. We must progress prudently. As I told you he has had only one outburst of madness, a real outburst of madness, the one the other night. It may be that I was mistaken.

Doctor.— I should be well pleased, and you would be, too.

Thomas.— My friend, I am so upset that I don't know what is happening! After all, your knowledge, your experience, your deep penetration will clear up our doubts.

Doctor.— You flatter me! As you are ——

Thomas.— Don't count on me, doctor; I am no good; I declare myself incompetent; this is a question of my best friend, one who is almost like a brother. Besides, it has always seemed to me — you know my belief; there is no dividing line between reason and madness.

Doctor.— Evidently, evidently; and all scholars have something — ,

Thomas.— Exactly; the brain excitement goes beyond a certain limit, and ——

Doctor.— Just so. We shall see what can be done for your friend. So then these two men ——

Thomas.— It will be easy to account for them. They might be witnesses, or we might say that they come with the notary — anything. Poor Lorenzo is not in a state to observe these small points.

Doctor.— And where can they wait?

Thomas.— In there. (*Points to the door on the left.*)

Doctor (*turns to the rear*).— Hello there! Braulio!

(*Enter the two keepers, well-dressed, but somewhat abashed, and showing by their clumsy and rough way what they are.*)

Thomas.— Go in there, in that little room; if you are needed we will let you know, and in the meantime keep quiet. (*The keepers bow and go off at the left.*) LORENZO has not entered that room since JANE died. If we close the door — (*closes it.*)

Doctor (*looking at the clock*).— I will come back again; I'll be here before the notary comes. I am going, near here ——

Thomas.— A call?

Doctor.— Yes, a very interesting case of insanity. (*Enter* ANGELA *from the right. She stops when she sees* BERMUDEZ.) Is that? (*Aside to* THOMAS *and glancing towards* ANGELA.)

Thomas.— Yes, the wife. Don't speak to her.

Doctor.— Until later. Madam. (*Bows. Exit at the rear.*)

SCENE III

Angela (*looks after* BERMUDEZ; *then looks toward the room where the keepers are*).— Who is that man who has just gone out? Who are the two men who came with him?

Thomas.— Calm yourself, Angela. It will all be settled. These are necessary precautions, because — who knows? Lorenzo may have another outburst of madness, as he did night before last, and for your sakes, for his own ——

Angela.— No, Thomas, don't say that.

Thomas.— Angela, don't you remember the frenzy with which he clasped in his arms poor Jane as she was dying? Now that no one hears us, and in confidence, I think that he was the fundamental cause ——

Angela.— Thomas! Thomas!

Thomas.— At least he hastened her death; and did you not notice how in his delirium he accused himself? Let us not delude ourselves; it was a real attack of ——

Angela (*bursting into tears*).— Lorenzo! My Lorenzo!

Thomas.— And the attack may return, because to-day ——

Angela.— Yes, now I know what you mean to do. Oh, Thomas, how unhappy we are. How unfortunate my poor Lorenzo is!

Thomas.— What is he doing now?

Angela.— He is very calm; he writes, walks about, wants to be with

Inez and with me, as if he were afraid to be alone. A little while ago he looked at me sadly but fondly, kissed me on the forehead and said, 'Poor Angela!'

Thomas.— Don't contradict him.

Angela.— No, we give him his way in everything.

Thomas.— And does he stick to his intention?

Angela.— Yes. From time to time he asks what time it is; he gets impatient because the notary does not come, and he murmurs in a low tone, 'In spite of the whole world I must do my duty.'

Thomas.— What a man! What a temperament!

Angela.— Thomas, I beg of you, don't deceive me! You think that Lorenzo? — I cannot, I cannot pronounce that horrible word!

Thomas.— I think nothing yet. We shall see, Angela; we shall see, my dear friend. Just for that, in order to escape at once from this unendurable anxiety I sent for Dr. Bermudez, a first-class alienist.

Angela.— But that is impossible, I tell you it is impossible!

Thomas.— I hope that you are right. We must not lose courage; but impossible? Human reason is such a little thing.

Angela (*in despair*).— My dear husband! No — I won't have it — it can't be so!

Thomas.— Come, Angela, good sense, courage, for that poor child, for Inez, at least. And who knows yet? We shall see what explanations Lorenzo gives, what proofs he offers.

Angela.— What proofs can the poor fellow offer if I myself heard Jane as she was dying, repeat, 'No, no, you are not my son,' while he, frantic, raving, clasping her in his arms, struggling to wrest from that body, then almost lifeless, an impossible confession, called her 'Mother,' with the strident shriek of madness! Don't comfort me; it is useless; I know that our trouble is inevitable.

Thomas.— I fear it only too much.

Angela.— And his manner of receiving the Duchess? He, always so courteous, so refined.

Thomas.— You are right; that day I understood it all, but no one resigns himself when fate wounds him suddenly.

Angela.— And adoring his daughter as he does, who would do what he intends to do to-day?

Thomas.— No one, Angela, no one who had not lost his mind.

Angela.— And you have told Bermudez this?

Thomas.— Not all, that would be dangerous; but enough for him to give us his opinion.

Angela — And what is it?

Thomas.— I cannot hide from you ——

Angela.— Useless, Thomas, useless! I know that there is indeed no remedy!

Thomas.— With good care, separated from the people, who just because they are so dear to him by their presence continually irritate his exaggerated sensitiveness.

Angela.— Thomas!

Thomas.— In a good asylum in Spain or abroad.

Angela.— What! What do you mean? To separate him from us? To take him away! Never; I am his wife! I don't consent to it!

Thomas.— Inez' presence increases his delirium.

Angela.— And his daughter's absence will kill him.

Thomas.— He choked that poor woman in his arms.

Angela.— No, Thomas, no; you are wrong there. Poor Inez runs no risk in Lorenzo's arms. She is his daughter!

Thomas.— And he thought that Jane was his mother.

Angela.— It must not be, Thomas, it must not be. Instead of tormenting me, why don't you seek some relief for my suffering?

Thomas.— Angela!

Angela.— It is true, my dear friend, that it is not easy to find comfort for my sorrow.

Thomas.— There is comfort for all human sorrow, however great it may be.

Angela.— There is little comfort for this.

Thomas.— In this more than in all; and if not, let us talk about the matter coolly.

Angela.— How, when fever is burning in our veins?

Thomas.— Listen to me. If what Lorenzo declares were true, if he should offer unquestionable proofs ——

Angela.— Then my Lorenzo will not have lost his wits; we should be the blind and inattentive ones. Oh, what happiness!

Thomas.— Not such great happiness, because then misery, dishonor, death would await you.

Angela.— Hush, Thomas!

Thomas.— Death, I say, besides misery, for Inez would die. On the other hand, if Lorenzo's affliction is certain ——

Angela.— Don't go on — I can't think of such things.

Thomas.— Then think of Inez, and thinking of her, realize, Angela, that these wounds are (*it is sad to say it, but it must be confessed*) terrible, but not fatal; for to youth that alone is fatal which destroys the future, not that which throws the past into nothingness.

Angela.— I beg of you, Thomas!

Thomas.— Inez's happiness depends on Lorenzo's affliction, let us keep that in mind.

Angela.— God's will be done; but don't rouse in me ideas that terrify rather than comfort.

Scene IV

(*Enter* Lorenzo *from the right.*)

Lorenzo (*aside*).— Now where did I leave the key? Oh, my head! And the notary will come very soon, and I remember very well that I put away the letter in that desk — yes, two days ago, when my mother ——

Thomas.— Poor Angela! It is a terrible proof!

(*They have not yet seen* Lorenzo.)

Lorenzo.— What? What are they saying? The proof, yes, they are talking of the proof. (*Uneasy and hunting on the table for the key to the desk.*)

Angela.— It is terrible, very terrible, to walk between two chasms — Lorenzo on one side, Inez on the other. You are right.

Lorenzo (*angrily and aloud*).— I have lost it!

Thomas (*turning and aside*).— Poor fellow, I think so, too!

Angela.— Lorenzo!

Lorenzo.— Ah! Were you there? (*Looks suspicious and as if he had not seen them before.*)

Angela (*gently*).— What are you looking for? We will help you.

Lorenzo.— You? No. Why? I, alone.

Angela.— But at least tell us what you have lost?

Lorenzo.— Everything, even the love of my family. Can I lose more!

Angela.— No, Lorenzo, don't think that.

Lorenzo.— At last — the key — thank heaven! (*Aside, distrustfully.*) And it was in the keyhole — it was. (*Opens the desk anxiously and takes the envelope that* Jane *left.*) Ah! Here it is! That has taken a weight off my mind! (*Reading.*) 'For Lorenzo.' This is the letter.

Angela (*coming up to him*).— Did you find what you were looking for? What is that paper?

(Lorenzo *is about to take the letter from the envelope, but seeing that* Angela *and* Thomas *are approaching, he puts it in the desk, turns the key, and stands guard over it.*)

Lorenzo (*with a certain lack of confidence and looking at them distrustfully*).— A very important paper. Why do you want to know?

Angela.— Don't get angry, Lorenzo dear. Pardon me, if I was indiscreet.

Lorenzo.— I pardon you! I who have need of your pardon. For me, by my fault, you are going to be so unhappy!

Angela.— Don't say that; we never shall be unhappy if you are happy.

Lorenzo.— And I, can I be happy if you and my darling Inez are not?

Angela.— That may be, too.

Lorenzo.— Impossible; because, do you know what I intend to do?

Angela.— You explained it to me just now. Don't you remember?

Lorenzo (*to* THOMAS).— And to you?

Thomas — To me too.

Lorenzo.— And do you approve?

Angela (*gently*).— Whatever you do will be all right.

Lorenzo (*to* THOMAS).— And you, what do you say?

Thomas.— The same.

Lorenzo.— The same! (*Thoughtfully.*) What uniformity! Do you know that I sent for a notary?

Angela.— We know it.

Lorenzo (*looking at both of them*).— You know it. And do you know that I am to have a legal act drawn up in due form of my declaration and my renunciation?

Angela.— Yes, dear Lorenzo.

Lorenzo.— In order that the judge may then proceed as the law provides. Isn't that right?

Thomas.— That is logical.

Lorenzo (*to* ANGELA).— What do you say?

Angela (*with tears in her voice*).— If the property that we are living on now does not belong to us, you are doing right.

Thomas.— If the name that you bear is not yours, you must renounce it.

Angela.— And in any case your will is law.

Lorenzo.— But a tyrannical, impious law, isn't it?

Angela.— A law that I acknowledge as the best.

Lorenzo (*uneasy, nervous, almost irritated*).— Don't you resist? Aren't you going to struggle?

Thomas.— Your conduct is that of a man of honor. To act honorably you can do nothing else.

Lorenzo.— What unlikely submission! What strange docility! What a sudden change! You are lying to me! (*Violently.*) I say that you are lying to me!

Angela.— Don't, Lorenzo!

Thomas (*aside*).— There is no hope! Madness, like a dark flood covers his brain.

Lorenzo (*becoming calmer*).— After all, it is better thus. (*Pause. Tenderly and turning to* ANGELA.) Where is Inez?

Angela.— My poor girl!

Lorenzo.— Aren't you going to defend her against me? (*Gently.*) Nevertheless, that is your duty.

Angela.— Alas, Lorenzo! What can an unhappy woman do against you? Your will is fixed in struggle and misfortune, mine yields until it bites the dust.

Lorenzo.— You are right; when duty inspires me my will is irresistible. (*To* THOMAS.) What do you say to all this?

Thomas.— That it must be so.

Lorenzo.— It is so. (*Pause.*) Poor Angela! Do you know what we are going to do when the act is signed and the proof given up?

Thomas.— Have you a proof?

Lorenzo — Didn't you know it? (*Aside and wildly.*) Why they were talking about it when I entered. Yes, I have it; evident, irrefutable, clear as light, although it is black as night and treason.

Angela.— Calm yourself, Lorenzo.

Thomas.— What is it?

Lorenzo.— A letter from my mother, from that woman who was called my mother.

Angela (*aside*).— What if this were true?

Lorenzo.— Her signature, her writing, and it is there — in my power.

Thomas (*aside*).— If that were true ——

Lorenzo.— Well, then, when the proof is given up, you (*to* ANGELA) and poor Inez and I will go out together from this house — this house that indeed is not ours, and of which to-day the law will take possession until the Avendaño heirs arrive. (*Gradually becomes excited.*) And meanwhile, we, without resources or name, holding in our arms a dying daughter, for (*to* THOMAS) you assure me that Inez will die, we will go alone, alone, and in despair. No, I was wrong. I blasphemed. We shall go with our honor intact, our conscience clear, our heads high, and with God. What does it matter if all abandon me if He is with me?

Angela.— Your will is law, Lorenzo (*puts her arms round him*). Before my lips said it, now my heart says it.

Thomas (*aside*).— If the proof exists this man is a saint. But, if it does not exist, my poor Lorenzo is a lunatic.

Servant (*announcing*).— The Duchess and Mr. Edward.

Angela.— Show them in. (*To* THOMAS.) Did you warn them?

Thomas (*aside to* ANGELA).— I talked to them last night. The Duchess promised me she would come, and you see she keeps her word.

Lorenzo.— I cannot see them, I want to be either alone, or with you — no one else. Good-by, my Angela.

Angela.— Good-by, Lorenzo.

Lorenzo (*looking at the clock*).— How the time drags! (*Goes towards the door at the right.* THOMAS *accompanies him.*) Did you notify the witnesses?

Thomas.— Two are waiting now, and another will come later.

Lorenzo.— Who are they?

Thomas.— You don't know them, friends of mine.

Lorenzo.— And mine, why not?

Thomas.— I thought that mine were yours.

Lorenzo (*looks at him a moment*).— And they are. (*Aside.*) This resignation! I should have preferred their resistance, their struggles!

SCENE V

(*Enter the* DUCHESS *and* EDWARD.)

Angela.— Duchess.

Duchess.— Mrs. Avendaño! (*They greet each other affectionately.*)

Angela.— Always so good to us!

Duchess.— In such a cruel situation I could not refuse you the comfort of a true friendship. God has willed that in different ways the same misfortune should wound us both. (*She utters these last words in a low tone, and pointing to* EDWARD.)

Angela.— But what is the name of the trouble that has come upon me? I don't know it.

Edward.— Then the moment has come to ascertain it; is it misery and shame and Inez' death, or is it — ?

Angela.— Edward!

Duchess.— Edward!

Edward.— Forgive me, mother, to-day we all owe ourselves the truth. you have said, 'I will endure Mr. Lorenzo's misfortune because of my love for you, because of your love for me; never will I endure his public dishonor, never, not even at the cost of your life.' Of my life, mother, isn't that it?

Duchess (*sadly but firmly*).— Yes.

Edward (*turning to* ANGELA).— Then let us know the name of your misfortune; is it dishonor, is it madness? This is the problem, and it must be solved. If he tells the truth, if his mind is well-balanced, if he offers proofs of what he asserts, let us respect his cruel uprightness. But if, as I believe, from a thousand indications that almost constitute evidence, an eternal veil clouds his mind and the light of his reason has gone out forever, then it is

your sacred duy to defend the name that Mr. Lorenzo bears, his social position, his fortune, his honor, even against his own delirium, and to defend, why not say it? the life and happiness of Inez. Don't leave such important interests and such dear possessions at the mercy of a madman.

Duchess.— Edward!

Edward.— It is a hard thing to say, but, after all, it had to be said. Let us know at once if this battle for honor and life in which he has engaged us is what it seems or what I fear; in short, whether the heroic sacrifice of the implacable scholar is madness or saintliness.

Duchess.— Enough, Edward.

(ANGELA *sits down on the sofa and weeps bitterly. The* DUCHESS *sits beside her.*)

Thomas (*to* EDWARD).—The future happiness of this family is as near my heart as if it were my own. What you propose is arranged, and law and science will decide.

Duchess.— May God enlighten you. (*To* ANGELA.) Come, be strong and calm. Where is Inez?

Angela.— Do you want to see her?

Duchess.— Yes.

Angela.— Come, (*to* THOMAS) you, too; I want you to see her. For three days now fever alone has given her strength. My child — my child is dying!

Thomas.— Poor girl!

(*Exit* ANGELA, *the* DUCHESS *and* THOMAS.)

SCENE VI

Edward.— And they still are in doubt! What blindness! They don't understand that good Mr. Lorenzo, by means of hunting not for the reason of the reasonless, like the knight-errant, but for the reason of all the reasons that philosophers have invented has ended by losing the only reason that pleased heaven to give him, which was his natural reason! It must not be; I must not let them sacrifice Inez's life to the illusions of a madman!

SCENE VII

Enter INEZ *excited and as if fleeing from the room on the left, where the keepers are.*)

Inez.— Who are those men, who are they?

Edward (*hurries to meet her*).— Inez, darling! How pale you are! What dark circles round your lovely eyes!

Inez.— Answer me; who are they? What are they waiting for? Send them away! (*Cautiously approaches the door which she left open and looks in;* EDWARD *tries to lead her away.*) There is something sinister about them. My father — where is my father? While I was hunting for him, I entered that room and I saw them. I don't want to see them, and I cannot take my eyes off them.

Edward.— Now what is the matter? Why don't you look at me? Why do you avoid me? Inez, Inez, do you regret our love?

Inez.— Our love! You know that it is life to me; but Edward, God has put it to a very terrible proof! You do not understand that. For me your love is supreme happiness, and the hope of your love is even greater happiness! Greater, much greater; for in it is the present, in the other is all the future. Nevertheless, Edward dear, hope is criminal for your Inez — criminal. Is such cruelty comprehensible? Fate denies to me what she refuses to no human being. Yesterday I was a child; my thought floated happy in a white transparent atmosphere like vaporous mist in the moonlight; to-day it is lead, it seems so heavy; lava, it seems so burning. If you knew what horrible things it says to me in the silence of the night! And those thoughts are not mine; it is not my will that gives them form; I don't know their source; I drive them away, but they return, and first they besiege me, moaning, 'Your poor father!' and then they torment me with tempting voices, muttering, 'Inez, Inez, who knows? You may be happy yet, your love is still possible; hope— hope, poor child!' Can you imagine anything more horrible (because that must be the spirit of evil) than to bear within one the voice of Satan, of him who has no hope, speaking of hope?

Edward.— Inez, don't speak so!

Inez (*coming close to* EDWARD).— It is remorse.

Edward.— For what?

Inez.— I don't know, I have done nothing wrong. My father! My poor father!

Edward.— Inez, beloved, be calm, quiet yourself, I beg you.

Inez.— Edward, I should like to die.

SCENE VIII

(*Enter* LORENZO *from the right. He stops on hearing* INEZ'S *voice.*)

Lorenzo (*aside*).— She said to die!

Edward.— You die? No, Inez, not that; don't say that.

Inez.— Why? If I don't die of sorrow; if I should be happy, I would die of remorse.

Lorenzo (*aside*).— Of remorse! She — if she were happy! What new fatality is floating in the air, hovering above my head? Remorse! Another hint that I have caught. I wander through rooms and halls— and I go from one place to another, spurred on unceasingly by unendurable pain, and I hear phrases that I do not understand, and people fix on me a gaze that says something that I do not understand either, and some weep and others smile, and all either avoid me or watch me. (*Aloud.*) What's this? What's this?

Inez (*goes up to him and puts her arms round him*).— My father!

Lorenzo.— Inez! How pale you are! What lines of sorrow round your mouth! Why do you feign smiles that must end in sobs? How lovely you are in your sorrow! And it is all my fault!

Inez.— No, father.

Lorenzo.— How cruel you are! You think it even if you don't say it.

Edward.— Inez is an angel, and there are no rebellious thoughts in her; but who, watching her suffer, would not think that and say it?

Lorenzo.— No one, you are right.

Edward (*fiercely*).— Then if I am right, you are not!

Lorenzo.— I am right, too. There is something paler than the pale face of this beloved girl; there is something sadder than the sad tears in her great eyes; there is something more cruel than the smile on her lips, and something more tragic than the death of the creature you love!

Edward (*violently and scornfully*).— And what is there that is paler, sadder, more tragic?

Lorenzo (*seizing him by one arm*).— Fool! The pallor of guilt, the tears of remorse, the consciousness of one's own infamy!

Edward.— And it is infamy and remorse and guilt to cause Inez's happiness?

Lorenzo (*in despair*).— It ought not to be! But it is! (*Pause.*) And that is my torture! And that idea will drive me mad!

Inez.— No, father, don't say that! Go your way without thinking of me! What does it matter whether I live or die!

Lorenzo.— Inez!

Inez.— But don't hesitate, and above all, don't let anyone see you hesitate; talk clearly and persuasively as you do now; don't be blinded by anger. Father, be calm, you must be calm!

Lorenzo.— What do you mean? I don't understand!

Inez.— Do I know myself what I mean? Good bye, good bye, I don't want to grieve you.

Edward (*to* Lorenzo).— If you would only heed your heart; if you would only stifle your thoughts!

Inez.— Leave him, come with me! Don't torment him, or you will make me hate you!

Lorenzo.— Poor child! She, too, struggles, but she conquers! To some purpose she is my daughter! (*Speaks in an outburst of pride.* INEZ *and* EDWARD *go towards the rear, as they pass in front of the door of the little room,* INEZ *sees the keepers and shudders with horror.*)

Inez.— What sinister vision is before me? Those men! No, father, don't go in there!

Edward.— Come, Inez, come!

Inez (*to her father*).— No, no, I implore you!

Lorenzo (*hurrying towards her*).— Inez!

Inez.— Those men! Those men! Look.

(*She points to the room.* LORENZO *stops and looks, too; at this moment the keepers, hearing cries, put their heads out between the hangings.*)

Edward (*dragging* INEZ *away*).— At last!

SCENE IX

(*Enter* BRAULIO *and* BENEDICT. *Short pause.*)

Lorenzo.— Who can they be? Come in.

(*The keepers enter with a certain bashfulness. They speak in awkward and laconic phrases.*)

Braulio.— Mr. Thomas.

Lorenzo (*aside*).— Now I understand.

Benedict.— He told us to wait in there.

Lorenzo.— I beg your pardon; I didn't know.

Braulio.— Never mind.

Lorenzo (*aside*).— They are rather odd. But won't you sit down.

Benedict.— Thanks.

Braulio.— We are all right, anywhere.

Lorenzo.— I cannot permit ——

Braulio.— You insist ——

Benedict.— If the gentleman wishes it, it is better to wait that way.

(*Both sit down on the sofa;* LORENZO *remains standing.*)

Lorenzo (*aside*).— Something sinister is reflected in their looks, or else my gaze reflects the flashes that are darting through my mind. (*Looks at them again attentively. Aloud.*) Inez was the one who in passing through the room saw you and warned me.

Braulio.— Yes, a very pretty young lady.

Benedict.— But very sad.

Braulio.— She seemed like Our Lady of Sorrows.

(*After each laconic answer from the keepers they suddenly relapse into silence, remaining rigid and motionless, and looking straight ahead.*)

Lorenzo.— She was frightened when she saw you and ran away; don't be surprised, the poor girl is very ill, and she is only a child.

Braulio (*with a vague, foolish smile*).— That is always happening to us in houses.

Lorenzo (*aside and wondering*).— In houses!

Benedict (*for the first time almost looking at* Lorenzo, *and afterwards looking straight before him again*).— Probably she is the daughter of that poor gentleman, eh?

Lorenzo.— Of whom?

Benedict (*without looking at him*).— Of the one who is (*taps his forehead, but without looking at* Lorenzo. Lorenzo *starts, unobserved by the keepers, as they are not looking at him.*)

Lorenzo (*aside*).— No! What an idea! (*Aloud and controlling himself.*) Exactly, Inez is the daughter of ——(*From this time* Lorenzo *watches them with increasing anxiety.*)

Benedict.— How beautiful and how sad she is!

Braulio.— Well, she has good reason to be sad.

Lorenzo.— Do you know?

Braulio.— All. (*Looks at* Lorenzo *again and then turns away.*)

Lorenzo.— Mr. Thomas has told you?

Benedict.— Us? No.

Braulio.— He talked to the doctor.

Benedict.— Us? What for? We attend to our duty.

Lorenzo (*aside*).— I feel a cold sweat like that of death break out all over me. I am out of my head. None of this can be true. (*Repeats mechanically.*) Your duty?

Braulio.— We are on hand if he becomes violent.

Lorenzo.— If he becomes violent. Who?

Braulio.— He!

Lorenzo (*walks back a few steps, looking at them with terror; draws his hand across his forehead, as if to dispel an idea; retreats further, sways, and leans on the table. Afterwards he talks in a dull tone, very low and in broken words.*) — So then you know all?

Braulio.— Almost all.

Benedict.— As we have waited quite a while, we heard the servants talking.

Lorenzo.— And they?

Braulio.— Told us the whole business. It appears that night before last Mr. Lorenzo had an attack, you probably know it better than we do.

Lorenzo (*more quiet and gloomy*).— Yes.

Benedict.— They say that he choked a poor old woman.

(LORENZO *shudders with horror and again puts his hands over his face.*)

Braulio.— There you are. A good start, and it's evident, the same thing always happens. The family ——

Lorenzo.— The family! (*Unclasps his hands, walks about as if moved by an electric shock, and looks at them with terrible anxiety.*)

Braulio.— Well, the family — it's natural. As they say that he wanted to give away his whole fortune, I don't know how many millions! Regular lunatic! Of course, the best thing is what they have arranged; to shut him up. We take him away, and the ladies remain in peace.

Lorenzo.— Me? They? Angela, Inez? No, no! Impossible! (*Retreats to the left.*)

Braulio (*turning to* LORENZO, *aside*).— But who is this gentleman? (*To* BENEDICT.) Look, look! (*Both keepers rise and turn to the left.*)

Lorenzo.— Air! Light! No! No light, but darkness! I must not see — or think! (*Drops in the armchair and buries his head in his hands.*)

Benedict.— Hold on! Why, I think it is ——

Braulio.— We've done it!

Benedict.— Who would have thought!

Braulio.— Let's go back to our hiding place.

Benedict.— Keep mum! We won't say anything.

(*They rise and with great precaution, continually watching* LORENZO, *they go towards the little room.*)

Braulio.— Sure. Not a word. They sent us there, there we are. We must not budge.

Benedict.— As we heard cries and exclamations ——

(*They reach the door, stop and look at* LORENZO, *who is still in the same attitude. A servant enters from the rear, crosses the room swiftly, and goes out on the right.*) Leave him — leave him while he is quiet.

(*They enter the little room and close the door.*)

SCENE X

(*Enter* THOMAS *and the servant from the right.*)

Lorenzo.— My God, remove the cup from my lips! I can bear no more! I tell You I can bear no more! (*Sobs in despair.*) You made me believe in them! You made me love them! And they, traitors! No, no! Lord, You gave me life, take it from me quickly! The horrible temptation is upon me to cast off this fleshly garment of corruption with my own hands! To die — I want to die! Do You hear? On my knees I ask it! I know

You are good and compassionate! Death, send me death, pale messenger of Your love!

(*Falls on his knees by the chair, and leaning against it, bows his head and hides his face in his hands.*)

Thomas (*in a low tone to the* SERVANT).— Are they both here?

Servant.— Yes, sir; the notary and Dr. Bermudez.

(THOMAS *and the* SERVANT *stop in the center to watch* LORENZO, *who is still on his knees sobbing.*)

Thomas.— Unhappy man! (*Takes a step toward* LORENZO. *Then decides otherwise, and goes to the rear.*) What is the use? Let us have it over quickly.

(*Exit* THOMAS *and the* SERVANT.)

SCENE XI

Lorenzo.— Now I am calmer! The wound is fatal! I feel it — here, in my heart! (THOMAS *and the* DOCTOR *enter from the rear and stop to watch* LORENZO.)

Thomas.— See, over there, by the arm-chair.

Doctor.— Poor fellow!

Lorenzo (*rising and aside*).— Wretched being! Still caressing impossible hopes! Impossible! If they really believe that I — If they loved me, they wouldn't believe it. (*Pause. Despairingly.*) I heard Inez, my own daughter, say, 'Remorse!' Why did she say remorse? (*With increasing excitement and aloud.*) All — fiends! They would almost rejoice if I were to die. No, I shall not die until I have done my duty as an honorable man, and ended my madness.

Thomas (*putting one hand on his shoulder*).— Lorenzo.

Lorenzo (*turning, and as he recognizes him, drawing back in displeasure*).— You!

Thomas.—Let me present to you, Mr. Bermudez, one of my best friends.

(*Pause.* LORENZO *looks at the two strangely.*)

Doctor (*to* THOMAS *in a low tone*).— See how he tries to control himself; I have no doubt that he is vaguely conscious of his condition.

Lorenzo.— One of your best friends — one of your best friends.

Doctor (*aside to* THOMAS).— The idea eludes him and he is trying to retain it.

Lorenzo (*sarcastically*).— Then, if he is one of your best friends, your loyalty answers to me for his.

Doctor (*aside to* THOMAS).— At last he found the phrase, but observe the unnatural intonation. (*Aloud.*) Thomas informs me that I am to be a witness of a magnanimous act.

Lorenzo.— And of an unworthy act of treachery besides.

Thomas.— Lorenzo!

Doctor (*aside to* THOMAS). Let him talk.

Lorenzo.— And of an unprecedented punishment.

Doctor (*aside to* THOMAS).— Very serious, Thomas, very serious.

Lorenzo.— Call them all — all of us and the outsiders. Let them come here and wait for my orders while I do my duty. What are you waiting for?

Doctor (*aside to* THOMAS).— Don't cross him; call them.

(THOMAS *rings a bell; a servant appears, to whom he whispers, and who goes out at the right.*)

Lorenzo.— It is the last trial. I almost pity the traitors. The security of my triumph sustains me. Be quiet, heart. They are here — they are here — I do not want to see them — I who loved them so much! I do not wish it, but my eyes are turning to them, and are seeking — seeking for them!

SCENE XII

(*Enter from the right* ANGELA, INEZ, *the* DUCHESS *and* EDWARD.)

Lorenzo.— Inez! It is impossible! She — it is impossible! My child! (*He rushes to her with open arms.* INEZ *runs to meet him.*)

Inez.— Father!

(BERMUDEZ *interposes and separates them forcibly.*)

Doctor.— Come, Mr. Lorenzo, you may do your daughter much harm.

Lorenzo (*seizing him by one arm and shaking him violently*).— Wretch! Who are you to separate me from her?

Thomas.— Lorenzo!

Edward.— Mr. Lorenzo!

(*The women keep together instinctively;* INEZ *in her mother's arms, the* DUCHESS *near the two;* THOMAS *and* EDWARD *rush up to free* BERMUDEZ *from* LORENZO'S *grasp.*)

Lorenzo (*aside, controlling himself*).— The fools will think that it is a fresh attack of madness. Of madness! (*Laughs softly to himself. All watch him.*)

Doctor (*aside to* THOMAS).— Undoubtedly.

Angela (*aside*).— My poor Lorenzo!

Inez (*aside*).— My father!

Lorenzo (*aside*).— Now you will see how my madness ends. Before leaving this house, how I shall enjoy throwing that doctor out! Courage —

the struggle gives me strength. For they can't assume a man is mad because he does his duty? That is not possible. Humanity is not so blind or so base. Enough! Treason, begin, and you, punishment, begin. (*Aloud.*) The hour has come for me to fulfill a sacred duty, although it is extremely painful for all. It is useless for you to witness formalities that the law requires, and that would merely bore you. The representative of the law waits for me in that room, and I, to obey a higher law, am going to give up property that is not mine, and a name that I can neither bear myself nor let my family bear. Afterwards I shall come here, and with my wife and with my — my daughter, without anyone being able to prevent me or to resist me, I shall leave this house which holds for me a past of love and happiness, which holds to-day a present of treason and infamy. Gentlemen (*to* THOMAS *and* BERMUDEZ), you precede me, if you please.

(*All slowly enter the room on the left. As he goes out* LORENZO *casts a glance at* INEZ.)

SCENE XIII

(*The three women in the foreground.* EDWARD *listening at the door of the little room.*)

Inez.— God help him!

Angela (*clinging to her daughter*).— Yes, you are right. Let us think only of him, let us pray only for him.

Duchess.— It is your sacred duty to place Mr. Lorenzo's welfare before your own, but in any case it is a no less sacred duty to resign ourselves to a higher will than ours. (*Pause.*)

Inez (*to* EDWARD).— What is he saying? Tell me what he is saying!

Edward.— He is speaking; his phrases are cold and severe, but without hesitation or uncertainty. (*He returns to the door.*)

Angela.— What painful anxiety! Death is preferable to this torture!

Inez.— And what does it matter what my poor father says if he is judged beforehand!

Angela.— No, child, don't say that.

Inez.— Yes, I say it because I feel it, because I feel it in those who are now his judges.

Angela.— But, what do you see?

Inez.— In those people, professional zeal.

Angela.— And in Thomas?

Inez.— His scientific opinions — how do I know — his own fads ——

Angela.— But in me?

Inez (*embracing her*).— Your love for me!

Angela.— Hush, Inez, hush!

Inez.— All against my father! My poor father!

Duchess.— You are mad, Inez!

Inez.— Yes, mad; like you, and like all of us except him. My heart tells me so! You, madam, what you desire is Edward's happiness; and Edward, my love; and I, his love; and my father and his virtue and his honor are obstacles for us all, and in us all is stirring something dark that wraps our conscience in shadow. My father, my father!

Angela.— Inez, what ideas!

Inez.— What is he saying? I hear his voice!

Edward (*coming forward*).— He speaks of a decisive proof.

Inez.— If there only were! (*To* EDWARD.) And now?

Edward.— They ask him to show this proof to state it in the act and to deliver it to the judge.

Angela.— And he?

Edward.— He smiles triumphantly. He is pale, very pale, but calm and dignified. Now he is coming (*Aside.*) This man frightens me.

Inez (*aside*).— If there only were — although my love would die!

Angela (*to the* DUCHESS).— Can it be true?

Duchess (*to* ANGELA).— Can it be true?

Edward (*aside, as he sees* LORENZO *enter*).— Ah! Perhaps I am the madman!

SCENE XIV

(*Enter* LORENZO, *the* DOCTOR, *and* THOMAS. *The three women are closely grouped together near the sofa;* EDWARD *is behind the sofa, looking at* LORENZO *with terror, and as if under his control.* LORENZO *advances calmly and proudly to the center of the stage;* THOMAS *and* BERMUDEZ *are behind him, and stop a few steps from the door.*)

Lorenzo (*reaches the table and triumphantly puts his hand on the writing-stand*).— Here is the proof — here! (*Pause. He opens the desk and takes out the envelope with the blank sheet of paper. Then he comes forward.* THOMAS *and* BERMUDEZ *on one side,* EDWARD *on the other, approach him.*)— Woe to those who thought to sacrifice me to their interest or their passion! Bitter will be their awakening and cruel their punishment! (*Deeply moved.*) Would that my pardon could soften it!

Angela (*coming up to him*).— Lorenzo!

Inez.— Father!

Lorenzo.— This is the proof, Thomas; this is the proof, Angela; this is the proof, my daughter! Listen! (*Pause.* LORENZO *opens the envelope.*

All surround him.) This is — what is this! (*Puts his hands to his eyes.*) What shadows cloud my eyes? Are there tears in them that prevent my seeing? No, I wept before, now I do not. (*He looks at the paper again with terrible anxiety, spreads it out, turns it over, hunts on all sides for the writing.*) But where is what that woman wrote? I have read it a thousand times — and now I cannot —(*To* THOMAS, *showing him the paper.*) What does it say here? Read it, read it at once. What does it say?

Thomas.— Nothing, my poor Lorenzo.

Lorenzo.— Nothing! (*Looks at the paper again.*) You are deceiving me! Bermudez, he is deceiving me! He is one of the wretches who has laid this infamous plot! Read it, you read it!

Doctor.— The paper is blank.

Lorenzo.— There is nothing written! You say that there is nothing written? It is not true — no, it is not true. Inez, my child, my faithful love, come, save your father! What does it say here?

Inez.— I see nothing, father!

Lorenzo.— Nothing. She too. But this — isn't this a proof?

Thomas.— Yes, my ill-fated friend, a proof, and a cruel one at that.

Lorenzo (*striking his forehead*).— Ah, I understand! (*Looking at* THOMAS *and* ANGELA.) Before they were talking of a proof! You! And you! (*To* ANGELA *and* THOMAS. They took it out of there! My God! (*He draws back from them with horror. All separate from him and in this way he remains in the center, but a little isolated. Pause.*) So be it! So be it! Conquered — basely conquered! How they enjoy their triumph! How they look at me with hypocritical sorrow. And they pretend to cry! They all pretend! (*Pause.*) My heart — the illusions of my life — love — my child, my child! Phantoms that speed and flee — flee forever! And I believed in all! How blue the sky was! How pale Inez was! And now, what shall I believe in? Now, you see, I don't struggle, I yield; the victory is yours. Why have those men come if I don't resist? I shall go where you like. Good-by! (*To* THOMAS *who comes up to him and takes his hand.*) Don't touch me! At the contact of human flesh it seems to me that snakes are crawling over me! I shall climb my Calvary alone — alone, with the cross of my sorrow, with no infamous Cyrenian to help me. Good-by,, honest friend, you who have saved the fortune of this unhappy family from the hands of a madman. Good-by, Angela, my beloved wife! Twenty years ago, mad with love, I gave you the first kiss! to-day, mad again, I give you the last! (*With a cry of utter despair.*)

Angela.— Lorenzo!

Lorenzo.— But don't come near me for I might choke you in my arms! (ANGELA *retreats.*) Good-by, my daughter. (*In a tearful voice.*) If you

can, be happy — I say nothing to you. I cannot speak to you angrily. (*Takes a few steps and stops for lack of strength; they start toward him, but he waves them back.*) Leave me, I need no one. Sweat bedews my forehead, and thirst parches my lips, and something burning swells my eyelids. (*Stops.*) Listen — Inez, my girl. If you still keep a little love for me, if, perhaps, you take pity on your father; if you regret what you all have done among you, come for the last time to my arms! Let me take to that hell of sorrow that awaits me a tear of yours on my forehead and a kiss from your lips on mine!

Inez.— Father! (*They try to restrain her, but she breaks away from all and runs to* Lorenzo, *who rushes toward her, and strains her to him.*)

Lorenzo.— Daughter! (*All hurry up to them, but do not try to separate them yet.*)

Inez.— No, they shan't take you away! I love you! They all lie except you!

Lorenzo.— You don't want those men to take me away?

Inez.— No, No! Save yourself, save me!

Lorenzo.— Yes, I will save you. Let them try to take you from my arms!

(*Tries to escape holding her in his arms.*)

Angela.— My child! My child! Help!

(Edward, Thomas *and* Bermudez *struggle to separate father and daughter.*)

Lorenzo.— I will not let her go! Eternally against my heart.

Inez.— Yes, yes, father! Save me!

Doctor.— We must.

Edward.— Mr. Lorenzo!

Thomas.— Lorenzo!

Duchess.— He will kill her as he killed Jane!

Angela.— Inez!

(*All these cries are almost simultaneous; the struggle is rapid; the keepers appear. At last the men overcome* Lorenzo, *and the two women hold* Inez, *who has been torn from her father's arms by main force.*)

Edward.— At last!

Inez (*holding out her arms*).— Father!

Lorenzo.— I could do no more, child! On my face I feel your tears and your kisses. She loved me, she was innocent. God, now I see. You accepted my torture in that night of struggle and temptation in exchange for her happiness! I do not regret it! Make her happy, very happy! And as for me — for me alone her cup of bitterness!

Inez.— Good-by! I am going to save you!

(LORENZO *is near the little room between the keepers and the other men who restrain him.* INEZ, *held by the women in the foreground, holds out her arms to him.*)

Lorenzo.— What can you do, my child, if God does not save me?

SHINNECOCK HILLS

By Christine Liebeneck Swayne

Between the hills the sea-fog crept;
Above the hills the sea-wind swept;
Among the hills old echoes slept,
Echoes of wind and sea!

Beyond the hills lost gulls were blown,
And wan, wet seaweed inland strown;
Behind the hills there went a moan,
Moan of the wind and sea.

Before the hills unstable sand
Faltered, while clinging to the land,
Shifted unable to withstand
Force of the wind and sea!

Across the hills a roadway ran,
Whereon, before the night began,
There moved a woman and a man,
Lured of the wind and sea.

"'Twas thus," they said, "when Chaos reigned,
Thus when the first low land obtained
A holding, and slow inches gained,
Won, of the wind and sea."

Thus Man Despair and Doubting fought,
As wind and sea, until he brought
His Faith to light, it slowly wrought,
Rock against wind and sea!

KANAWA

A Crown of Iron Spikes*

A Japanese Classical Drama

Translated from the Japanese by T. Ochiai

CHARACTERS

A Priest.
A Woman.
A Man.
Abe-no-Seimei.

Time — Night

Priest.— This is I, guardian of the Shrine of Kibune. Tonight I am charged through the sacred dream to deliver an oracle to a woman who is due here to offer her prayer at the hour of Ox.

Woman.— It were safer to hitch a wild horse to a spider's web than trust in an insincere man. The fault, indeed, was mine; for it was this ignorant soul that had first felt attracted to him. But how wretched is the heart that was betrayed! Even now I will go to the Shrine of Kibune, and, to appease the agony of remorse, pray that I might witness the wrath of god incurred upon him in this present world.

(*At the dead of night, making her way through the dewy field of Ichihara, and then crossing the bridge over the river Kurama, on whose waters were shining the late-rising moon, she has at last arrived in the Shrine of Kibune.*)

Woman.— Having hurried all the way, here I am already in the grounds of the Shrine of Kibune. Well, I shall slacken my pace and approach the shrine calmly. With resolute spirit I must make my request known to the god.

Priest.— I see you have come up from the town to offer the Ox-hour prayer, for I have just received the oracle concerning you through the sacred dream. Your prayer has already been granted. It is requested that you should go home, wear a crimson garment, paint your face also with crimson, and put on your head a crown of iron spikes with lighted candles on them. Thus equipped rouse yourself into fury. You will then

*The authorship of this play is attributed to Motokiyo (who died in 1455), the most celebrated of the Japanese lyric dramatists.

be able to become the very demon you wanted. Hasten, I tell you, go home, and make preparations in accordance with [illegible]s august command.

Woman.— You surprise me. You are not addressing to a wrong person?

Priest.— Nay, woman, I am not mistaken. In all conscience such was the oracle concerning you. It is a most wonderful decree. Even now there I find your features are undergoing changes; you look every moment more horrible. Make haste to your home.

Woman.— What a marvelous oracle! I will forthwith go home and do as I am told.

(*No sooner had she said these words than her whole appearance changed — her long hairs ruffling, as if by a sudden tempest; and there stood she, a devil of remorse, looking furious, raving, and intent upon revenge.*)

Man.— This is I who live in the lower district of the town. I have of late been annoyed at evil dreams, so I want to call on Seimei, the astrologer of far renown. He would be able to explain them and suggest some means for my relief.

Man.— Admit me, if you please.

Seimei.— Who is this?

Man.— I have come up from the lower district of the town. I have of late been every night tormented by evil dreams.

Seimei.— Why, I see very plainly a horrible sign clinging to your person — a sign of woman's resentment. There is an awful demon somewhere, now fast working to your ruin. Sure, you are reminded of some offence you gave to some woman?

Man.— Most certainly I am. What should I keep from you now? Some time ago I sent away my wife and bestowed my affection upon another woman.

Seimei.— That accounts for this. The unceasing petition to the god for vengeance by the forsaken woman having by this time reached its climax in zeal and intensity, you are doomed to breathe the last of your breath this very night.

Man.— I rejoice to have been fortunate enough to see you just at the critical moment. Favor me, I beseech you, with your remonstrances against the gods for my sake.

Seimei.— Very well. I will exert my power to the utmost and try to avert the course of your fate to safety. See to it that you lose no time in making the offerings to gods.

(SEIMEI *makes a life-size human shape of straw. He sets up a high altar with three-fold shelves, decorating it with the clothes of five different colors, and arranging all sorts of offerings on it. He writes the man's name on the*

strawman. Then with might and main he says his prayers for the safety of the figure. He addresses all the gods in heaven and in earth, all the Buddhist deities, and all the chief constellations in the skies. Then behold! lightnings filled the air and the tempest raged, tossing the paper pendants decorating the altar to all directions.)

Woman.— The flower blooms by the warm breeze of spring, and by the same breeze it is blown off. The moon, rising from among the eastern hills, sinks in due time into the west. The course of retribution is as sure as that of nature. So will the punishment fall on the hard hearted.

(*Changed into a monster, with the flaming crown of iron spikes, she approaches the man in sleep.*)

Woman.— It is very long, husband, since I laid my head beside yours. Wherefore did you forsake me, in spite of our first pledge of love for time and eternity? How bitterly I have wept! how revengeful I have felt toward you! then how dearly I have hankered after you! again how hard and bitter I have felt! Sleeping or awaking, the fire of remorse burns me. It will not die, until it will burn you out.

Chorus.— With hatred upon hatred accumulated, the woman is turned into the devil of remorse. It is natural indeed that she is made so.

Woman.— Now, let me go and take his life away.

(*The woman tries to bend over the bed of the man, but finds there the mankind shape of straw protected by the host of gods, who shout and scorn her not to approach and pollute the place. Thereupon, deprived of her fearful power, she turns away, vanishing as she goes,— an invisible devil.*)

THE END